

On the Absurd Hegemony of Science

Renowned philosopher Daniel C. Dennett debates scientism in one of the most popular philosophy discussions in recent history. "A book without an end..".

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GMO Debate

A critical perspective on eugenics

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- 2.103. Terrapin Station: *Parsing Wikipedia quote on magenta perception and denying qualia problem*
- 2.104. Terrapin Station: *Kindle typo correction*
- 2.105. Atla: *Semantic distinction between 'is' and 'associated with'*
- 2.106. Terrapin Station: *Defending physicalism against narrow interpretation*
- 2.107. Terrapin Station: *Clarifying perception: 'associated with' vs 'is' in understanding sensory experience*
- 2.108. Steve3007: *Curious about backstory of previous discussion participant*
- 2.109. Atla: *Playful response to discussion intensity and perceived intellectual level*
- 2.110. Atla: *Defending physicalism: Challenging narrow interpretation of philosophical stance*
- 2.111. Atla: *Disputing nuanced explanation of perception and color experience*
- 2.112. Terrapin Station: *Explaining physicalism: Not subservience to physics, but philosophical approach*
- 2.113. Atla: *Brief dismissal of previous argument about physicalism*
- 2.114. Terrapin Station: *Challenging interpretation of perception and qualia in scientific understanding*
- 2.115. Terrapin Station: *Sharing scientific resource on light and color perception*
- 2.116. Sculptor1: *Challenging demand for Standard Model explanation of qualia properties*
- 2.117. Terrapin Station: *Sarcastic challenge to scientism's claim of universal explanatory power*
- 2.118. Sculptor1: *Reflection on color theory and brain's role in perception*
- 2.119. Atla: *Dismissive comment about misunderstanding wavelength and scientific reasoning*
- 2.120. Gertie: *Dennett's view on qualia: physical processes vs mental experience*
- 2.121. GE Morton: *Representation in perception: no resemblance required*
- 2.122. Sculptor1: *Questioning the layers of perceptual representation*
- 2.123. GE Morton: *Critique of mental states being identical to brain states*
- 2.124. Terrapin Station: *Defending identity of mental and brain states*
- 2.125. Terrapin Station: *Challenging misunderstanding of wavelength averaging*
- 2.126. Sculptor1: *Rejecting mystical interpretations of mental states*
- 2.127. Atla: *Critique of wavelength argument and intellectual capability in scientific debate*
- 2.128. GE Morton: *Philosophical argument on identity and distinguishable properties*
- 2.129. Gertie: *Dennett-inspired exploration of consciousness, qualia, and brain's virtual modeling*
- 2.130. Atla: *Skeptical view of Dennett's philosophical consistency and motivations*
- 2.131. GE Morton: *Debate on mental states, brain states, and physical vs experiential realms*
- 2.132. Gertie: *Challenge to identity of physical brain and experiential mental states*
- 2.133. Gertie: *Criticism of Dennett's philosophical approach and claim substantiation*
- 2.134. Atla: *Speculation on Dennett's publicity-seeking philosophical tactics*
- 2.135. Sculptor1: *Argument that all states are fundamentally physical, rejecting non-physical realms*
- 2.136. Steve3007: *Meta-commentary on discussion participant's engagement style*
- 2.137. GE Morton: *Challenging reductive physicalism: Knowledge and mental states transcend pure physical description*
- 2.138. Terrapin Station: *Questioning wave frequency reduction in philosophical argument*

- 2.139. Terrapin Station: *Debating identity and distinguishability of objects*
- 2.140. Terrapin Station: *Exploring first-person vs third-person perspectives on brain and mental states*
- 2.141. GE Morton: *Functional explanation of consciousness and AI: Beyond reductive causality*
- 2.142. GE Morton: *Challenging algorithmic translation between brain states and subjective experience*
- 2.143. Terrapin Station: *Asserting mental properties as inherently physical properties*
- 2.144. Terrapin Station: *Defending possibility of translating brain states to mental states*
- 2.145. Terrapin Station: *Probing philosophical consistency of object identity*
- 2.146. GE Morton: *Rejecting claim of mental properties being identical to physical properties*
- 2.147. GE Morton: *Mental states transcend brain scans: content of thought cannot be captured by fMRI*
- 2.148. GE Morton: *Identical observations across time: Venus as morning and evening star*
- 2.149. Terrapin Station: *Properties vary by spatiotemporal perspective, not contradiction*
- 2.150. Terrapin Station: *Third-person vs first-person perspectives: fMRI reveals brain, not subjective experience*
- 2.151. Terrapin Station: *Challenging identity: Morning star and evening star have distinguishable properties*
- 2.152. GE Morton: *Rejecting perspective-dependent properties: External objects have consistent attributes*
- 2.153. GE Morton: *Defending object identity: Morning star observations differ only in context*
- 2.154. Terrapin Station: *No absolute reference point: Properties exist only through specific perspectives*
- 2.155. Terrapin Station: *No observer-independent properties: Reference points always contextual*
- 2.156. GE Morton: *Critiquing third-person perspectives: Mental content inaccessible via external observation*
- 2.157. Terrapin Station: *Challenging misunderstanding of perspective as spatiotemporal reference points*
- 2.158. Terrapin Station: *Only mental brain states provide first-person reference point access*
- 2.159. GE Morton: *Rejecting relativist view: Object properties are constant across perspectives*
- 2.160. GE Morton: *Disagreement on definition of perspective vs reference points*
- 2.161. GE Morton: *Challenging mental-physical divide: Brain states vs mental phenomena*
- 2.162. Atla: *Frustration with forum discussion quality and participant behavior*
- 2.163. Sculptor1: *Knowledge as physical: Arguing mental states require physical substrate*
- 2.164. Terrapin Station: *Defending perspective-dependent nature of object shape*
- 2.165. Terrapin Station: *Criticizing rigid interpretation of terminology usage*
- 2.166. Terrapin Station: *Challenging notion of accessing other reference points*
- 2.167. Gertie: *Exploring consciousness as a brain-generated model and AI potential*
- 2.168. Gertie: *Challenging perspective on mental vs physical brain states*
- 2.169. Terrapin Station: *Questioning how brains can be 'experiencing systems'*
- 2.170. Terrapin Station: *Defending spatiotemporal perspective as explanation for consciousness*
- 2.171. Gertie: *Acknowledging uncertainty about brain experience mechanisms*
- 2.172. GE Morton: *Mental phenomena as dependent but not reducible to physical systems*
- 2.173. GE Morton: *Critiquing spatiotemporal reference point explanation*
- 2.174. Gertie: *Challenging perspective-based explanation of Subject-Object distinction*
- 2.175. GE Morton: *Arguing for objective physical properties independent of reference points*
- 2.176. Sculptor1: *Challenging mystification of mental phenomena*
- 2.177. GE Morton: *Challenging representations of reality: qualia as unique conscious experiences*
- 2.178. GE Morton: *Debating physicality of knowledge and mental phenomena*
- 2.179. Terrapin Station: *Questioning brains as experiencing systems without physical mentality*
- 2.180. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing spatiotemporal reference point explanation of properties*
- 2.181. Terrapin Station: *Challenging explanation of phenomenal experience through reference points*
- 2.182. Terrapin Station: *Debating object shape and reference point dependency*
- 2.183. Terrapin Station: *Clarifying physicality beyond laws of physics*
- 2.184. GE Morton: *Exploring consciousness, AI, and Dennett's functional approach*

- 2.185. GE Morton: *Arguing shape existence independent of reference points*
- 2.186. Terrapin Station: *Challenging sphere shape definition without reference points*
- 2.187. Atla: *Questioning the nature and composition of brain's virtual model*
- 2.188. Terrapin Station: *Pressing for resolution of ontological disagreement on brain–mind relationship*
- 2.189. GE Morton: *Virtual model as emergent field effect within brain systems*
- 2.190. GE Morton: *Clarifying previous statement on field effect metaphor*
- 2.191. GE Morton: *Rejecting Terrapin Station's ontological framework as incoherent*
- 2.192. Terrapin Station: *Challenging Morton's dismissal of ontological objections*
- 2.193. Atla: *Critiquing strong emergence as scientifically accepted 'magic'*
- 2.194. Terrapin Station: *Demanding clarity on Morton's 'non–tangible' brain model concept*
- 2.195. Pattern–chaser: *Meta–query about ongoing discussion on science's hegemony*
- 2.196. Atla: *Challenging critique of brain model based on incomplete understanding*
- 2.197. Terrapin Station: *Challenging claims of non–tangible consciousness beyond physical explanation*
- 2.198. evolution: *Defending objective knowledge claims in scientific discourse*
- 2.199. Terrapin Station: *Disagreement over epistemic certainty between forum participants*
- 2.200. evolution: *Assertive rejection of opponent's arguments with claims of absolute correctness*
- 2.201. Steve3007: *Humorous speculation on potential scientific governance model*
- 2.202. Terrapin Station: *Philosophical analysis of knowledge as justified true belief*
- 2.203. Terrapin Station: *Meta–commentary on opponent's epistemological stance*
- 2.204. Atla: *Critiquing Dennett's qualia eliminativism as ontologically problematic*
- 2.205. evolution: *Debating distinction between knowing and believing*
- 2.206. evolution: *Asserting absence of personal beliefs in philosophical discourse*
- 2.207. evolution: *Dennett's qualia eliminativism: absurd scientific reduction of subjective experience*
- 2.208. Terrapin Station: *Challenging simplistic notion of knowledge in philosophical discourse*
- 2.209. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Dismissing qualia as philosophical invention, defending scientific ontology*
- 2.210. Gertie: *Exploring consciousness, AI, and the challenges of understanding subjective experience*
- 2.211. GE Morton: *Hard Problem of consciousness: scientific method's limits in explaining subjective phenomena*
- 2.212. GE Morton: *Questioning brain's self–awareness and model generation process*
- 2.213. GE Morton: *Minor correction to previous post*
- 2.214. Atla: *Retort to Faustus5's dismissal of qualia in ontology*
- 2.215. Atla: *Challenging functionalism and defending reality of mental experience*
- 2.216. Atla: *Clarification of previous statement on experience*
- 2.217. Terrapin Station: *Challenging view on physical fields as theoretical constructs in physics*
- 2.218. Gertie: *Critique of Dennett's approach to consciousness and explanatory gap*
- 2.219. GE Morton: *Defending qualia as empirical sensory impressions, not mystical phenomena*
- 2.220. GE Morton: *Brain–model dynamics and consciousness: Challenging substrate requirements*
- 2.221. GE Morton: *Turing test as potential measure of machine consciousness*
- 2.222. evolution: *Brief exchange on nature of knowledge*
- 2.223. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing misinterpretation of homunculus model in psychology*
- 2.224. Terrapin Station: *Seeking philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge*
- 2.225. Pattern–chaser: *Limits of scientific worldview: Science cannot explain everything*
- 2.226. Sculptor1: *Science's appropriate role: Complementary, not central to complex domains*
- 2.227. Sculptor1: *User confused by forum's mention function*
- 2.228. GE Morton: *Fields, theories as abstractions: challenging reductive explanations of experience*
- 2.229. Atla: *Challenging emergence theories, arguing for universal qualia*
- 2.230. GE Morton: *Epiphenomenalism: mental phenomena's causal role in physical processes*

- 2.231. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing Morton's understanding of physical and spatial concepts*
- 2.232. GE Morton: *Defending definition of 'physical' and challenging omnipresence concept*
- 2.233. Atla: *Pointing out Morton's confusion between forces and fields*
- 2.234. Atla: *Challenging Morton's view on spacetime and field existence*
- 2.235. Gertie: *Exploring brain architecture and emergence of unified self experience*
- 2.236. Terrapin Station: *Refuting Morton's arguments about physical and spatial concepts*
- 2.237. Sculptor1: *Challenging definition of tangible: physical things aren't always touchable*
- 2.238. Terrapin Station: *Mocking dictionary definition as simplistic argument strategy*
- 2.239. GE Morton: *Qualia as subjective experience: not universal laws of nature*
- 2.240. GE Morton: *Expanding philosophical meaning of 'tangible' beyond touch*
- 2.241. GE Morton: *Physical vs everyday understanding: fields and location*
- 2.242. Gertie: *Exploring consciousness models: brain, feedback, and self-awareness*
- 2.243. evolution: *Rejecting philosophical analysis in favor of direct observation*
- 2.244. GE Morton: *Consciousness determined by behavior, not substrate*
- 2.245. Atla: *Qualia as product of specific physical systems, not universal*
- 2.246. Sculptor1: *Critiquing narrow understanding of physical objects*
- 2.247. Sculptor1: *Challenging language use and definitions in philosophical debate*
- 2.248. Terrapin Station: *Challenging philosophical analysis and propositional knowledge approach*
- 2.249. Terrapin Station: *Brain-mind identity compared to morning star/evening star perspective*
- 2.250. evolution: *Defending subjective perception and challenging philosophical context*
- 2.251. Terrapin Station: *Questioning participant's understanding of philosophical context*
- 2.252. Gertie: *Exploring consciousness, AI, and potential robot rights with Dennett reference*
- 2.253. GE Morton: *Responding to ad hominem critique in philosophical debate*
- 2.254. GE Morton: *Requesting clarification of previous claims and questions*
- 2.255. Atla: *Challenging critical thinking and conceptual understanding in debate*
- 2.256. GE Morton: *Detailed critique of brain-mind identity and perspectival arguments*
- 2.257. GE Morton: *Challenging Atla's understanding of philosophical and scientific terms*
- 2.258. Atla: *Questioning Morton's grasp of physical concepts and identity*
- 2.259. Terrapin Station: *Affirming brain vs mind observational differences*
- 2.260. Terrapin Station: *Emphasizing first-person vs third-person observational perspectives*
- 2.261. GE Morton: *Exploring Leibniz's identity criteria and qualia-brain state relationship*
- 2.262. Atla: *Challenging definitions of physical and field properties*
- 2.263. Terrapin Station: *Disputing philosophical definition of 'physical'*
- 2.264. GE Morton: *Arguing against qualia-brain state identity through direct comparison*
- 2.265. GE Morton: *Questioning uniqueness of philosophical definitions*
- 2.266. Terrapin Station: *Rejecting physics-based definition of 'physical'*
- 2.267. Terrapin Station: *Qualia and brain activity: perspectives reveal same underlying reality*
- 2.268. GE Morton: *Confusion over first-person vs third-person observational perspectives*
- 2.269. Terrapin Station: *Unique first-person perspective of mental experience distinguishes consciousness*
- 2.270. GE Morton: *Consciousness as natural phenomenon emerging from complex evolutionary systems*
- 2.271. Wosname: *Identity theory: consciousness as brain process, not separate phenomenon*
- 2.272. Atla: *Challenging direct comparison between qualia and brain activity*
- 2.273. Atla: *Radical claim: all physical events are potentially mental events*
- 2.274. Sculptor1: *Brain scans can reveal qualitative experiences across perspectives*
- 2.275. Steve3007: *Defining 'physical' through empirical observation and scientific description*
- 2.276. Wosname: *Questioning universal mental nature of all physical events*

- 2.277. Atla: *Arguing physical arrangement implies mental properties*
- 2.278. Wosname: *Questioning consciousness beyond brain activity*
- 2.279. Atla: *Distinguishing two types of consciousness: self-awareness and universal qualia*
- 2.280. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Challenging Atla's view on universal consciousness*
- 2.281. Sculptor1: *Critiquing assumptions about consciousness and scientific discovery*
- 2.282. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Sarcastically questioning scientific origin of qualia concept*
- 2.283. Atla: *Defending view of universal first-person experience*
- 2.284. Wosname: *Requesting clarification on Atla's consciousness theory*
- 2.285. Steve3007: *Expressing confusion about Atla's consciousness argument*
- 2.286. Wosname: *Struggling to understand Atla's view on consciousness*
- 2.287. Steve3007: *Interpreting Atla's two types of consciousness: universal vs. brain-specific*
- 2.288. Gertie: *Challenging Atla's claim of universal consciousness beyond nervous systems*
- 2.289. Sculptor1: *Science's role in understanding subjective experience and qualia*
- 2.290. Terrapin Station: *Physical events and mental properties as emergent phenomena*
- 2.291. evolution: *Dispute over understanding philosophical context*
- 2.292. Terrapin Station: *Challenging definition of propositional knowledge in philosophy*
- 2.293. Steve3007: *Skepticism about panpsychism and universal consciousness*
- 2.294. Steve3007: *Questioning consciousness through set theory and classification*
- 2.295. Atla: *Consciousness as existence itself, beyond scientific investigation*
- 2.296. Terrapin Station: *Challenging vague philosophical claims with demand for clarity*
- 2.297. Atla: *Defending complexity of philosophical ideas beyond common understanding*
- 2.298. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing communication barriers in philosophical discourse*
- 2.299. Atla: *Nondualism: Deep thinking requires patience and personal effort*
- 2.300. Gertie: *Exploring consciousness: Panpsychism and challenges of material explanation*
- 2.301. GE Morton: *Debating perspectives and properties of qualia and experience*
- 2.302. Terrapin Station: *Seeking references for understanding nondualism*
- 2.303. Gertie: *Consciousness: AI, biological similarity, and experiential uncertainty*
- 2.304. GE Morton: *Challenging reductive views of mental phenomena and qualia*
- 2.305. Terrapin Station: *Properties, perspectives, and the nature of conscious experience*
- 2.306. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Dennett-aligned critique of qualia as unscientific ideological perspective*
- 2.307. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Challenging scientific status of Peirce's philosophical work, comparing to Dennett*
- 2.308. Atla: *Exploring non-dual consciousness through Eastern philosophy and quantum mechanics*
- 2.309. Terrapin Station: *Engaging with Zen Buddhism and non-dual philosophical perspectives*
- 2.310. Atla: *Discussing authentic vs pseudo-Advaita interpretations of consciousness*
- 2.311. Terrapin Station: *Brief exchange on recommended consciousness research materials*
- 2.312. Sculptor1: *Heated debate on scientific status of philosophical knowledge claims*
- 2.313. evolution: *Relativist perspective on propositional knowledge and observer-dependent truth*
- 2.314. GE Morton: *Detailed philosophical analysis of mind-brain identity and subjective experience*
- 2.315. Wosname: *Responding to challenges in mind-brain identity philosophical debate*
- 2.316. Terrapin Station: *Questioning the definition of propositional knowledge in philosophical debate*
- 2.317. Atla: *Science and nonduality conference: Interdisciplinary dialogue with mixed results*
- 2.318. Atla: *Critique of science and nonduality conference's credibility due to Deepak Chopra*
- 2.319. evolution: *Challenging assumptions about universal propositional knowledge definition*
- 2.320. Terrapin Station: *Seeking personal analysis of propositional knowledge concept*
- 2.321. evolution: *Emphasizing specificity and context in philosophical questioning*
- 2.322. GE Morton: *Exploring mind-brain relationship beyond traditional identity criteria*

- 2.323. Wosname: *Critiquing proposed mind–brain relationship postulates and potential dualism*
- 2.324. Terrapin Station: *Reaffirming request for personal perspective on propositional knowledge*
- 2.325. Terrapin Station: *Criticizing Mary's Room thought experiment as philosophically flawed*
- 2.326. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing incoherence of mental phenomena and physical phenomena relationship*
- 2.327. Pattern–chaser: *Warning about potentially unsafe website link*
- 2.328. Wosname: *Acknowledging website safety warning*
- 2.329. GE Morton: *Defending Mary's Room thought experiment against criticism*
- 2.330. Atla: *Verifying website safety via virus scan*
- 2.331. GE Morton: *Exploring consciousness, AI, and experiential models in philosophical debate*
- 2.332. Atla: *Challenging Kantian divide between phenomenal and noumenal worlds*
- 2.333. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Defending philosophical origins of qualia concept against scientific claims*
- 2.334. Sculptor1: *Arguing Peirce's scientific and philosophical contributions*
- 2.335. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Challenging claims about Peirce's scientific work on qualia*
- 2.336. Sculptor1: *Challenging Peirce's scientific contributions and philosophical significance*
- 2.337. Gertie: *Physicalist Identity Theory fails to explain subjective experience and consciousness*
- 2.338. Atla: *Experience as fundamental, physical reality as cognitive overlay*
- 2.339. Steve3007: *Placeholder post for future reflection on previous discussion*
- 2.340. Wosname: *Defending Identity Theory's approach to consciousness and evolution*
- 2.341. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing Mary's Room thought experiment as fundamentally flawed*
- 2.342. Gertie: *Exploring challenges of inter–subjective knowledge and experiential reality*
- 2.343. Gertie: *Seeking criteria for evaluating competing consciousness theories*
- 2.344. Terrapin Station: *Challenging the sufficiency of claiming experience as fundamental*
- 2.345. Gertie: *Acknowledging new problems arising from experience–first perspective*
- 2.346. evolution: *Denies having a personal analysis of propositional knowledge*
- 2.347. GE Morton: *Critiques Kantian phenomenal vs noumenal world distinction*
- 2.348. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Challenges scientific credentials of philosopher's scientific background*
- 2.349. GE Morton: *Questions physicality of qualia in Mary's Room thought experiment*
- 2.350. Terrapin Station: *Argues against question–begging in Mary's Room philosophical debate*
- 2.351. Sculptor1: *Dismissive response to previous user's claims*
- 2.352. Sculptor1: *Argues qualia are physical, experience reveals internal nature*
- 2.353. Terrapin Station: *Cites sources showing Mary's Room challenges physicalism*
- 2.354. Sculptor1: *Argues sensory experience cannot be fully described externally*
- 2.355. GE Morton: *Explores nuanced definitions of 'physical' in qualia debate*
- 2.356. GE Morton: *Challenging dualism: Mary's red experience doesn't necessitate metaphysical divide*
- 2.357. Atla: *Critiquing Kant's noumenal/phenomenal world distinction and experience's fundamentality*
- 2.358. Atla: *Exploring experience as fundamental and physical world as cognitive overlay*
- 2.359. Terrapin Station: *Analyzing Mary's knowledge problem and qualia's physical nature*
- 2.360. Terrapin Station: *Defining 'physical' and challenging qualia's non–physical status*
- 2.361. Sculptor1: *Arguing physical interaction essential to understanding experience*
- 2.362. Gertie: *Debating mental phenomena's reducibility and brain–mind relationship*
- 2.363. Gertie: *Questioning AI consciousness and behavioral testing reliability*
- 2.364. GE Morton: *Critiquing definitions of 'physical' and qualia's production*
- 2.365. GE Morton: *Defending behavior as sole criterion for determining consciousness*
- 2.366. Steve3007: *Exploring definitions of 'physical': beyond physics textbooks and sensory perception*
- 2.367. Pattern–chaser: *Malwarebytes website safety discussion*
- 2.368. Terrapin Station: *Challenge to circular definitions in philosophical terminology*

- 2.369. Terrapin Station: *Clarifying nuanced understanding of 'physical' beyond simple material equivalence*
- 2.370. Terrapin Station: *Questioning philosophical curiosity about propositional knowledge*
- 2.371. GE Morton: *Challenging substance ontology and exploring mental–physical relationship complexity*
- 2.372. Atla: *Critiquing qualia and substance theory in mind–body problem*
- 2.373. evolution: *Challenging indirect questioning about philosophical interests*
- 2.374. Wosname: *Exploring mental–physical interaction and ontological perspectives*
- 2.375. Terrapin Station: *Seeking direct response about philosophical curiosity*
- 2.376. Gertie: *Questioning non–reducibility of mental phenomena to physical brain states*
- 2.377. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Defending non–reductive view of mental states without separating from brain states*
- 2.378. Terrapin Station: *Seeking clarification on previous reductionism definition*
- 2.379. GE Morton: *Explaining qualia as non–reducible effects of physical systems*
- 2.380. GE Morton: *Challenging assumption of causal action beyond brain processes*
- 2.381. Atla: *Critiquing GE Morton's arguments about qualia and physical effects*
- 2.382. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Restating definition of reductionism as vocabulary transformation*
- 2.383. Terrapin Station: *Critiquing linguistic approach to mind–body problem*
- 2.384. Terrapin Station: *Dismissing linguistic conventions in understanding mind–body relationship*
- 2.385. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Citing 'heat is molecular motion' as successful reductionism example*
- 2.386. GE Morton: *Mental phenomena as effects of physical processes, not alternative substances*
- 2.387. Steve3007: *Defining physical phenomena through sensory experiences and material relations*
- 2.388. Gertie: *Challenging the irreducibility of mental experience to brain activity*
- 2.389. Gertie: *Functionalist perspective on mental states and brain states*
- 2.390. Wosname: *Exploring consciousness as generated physical phenomenon beyond brain processing*
- 2.391. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Functionalist critique of reductionism in mental state description*
- 2.392. Terrapin Station: *Discussion of ostensive definitions in philosophical terminology*
- 2.393. Steve3007: *Confirmation of ostensive definition concept*
- 2.394. Steve3007: *Challenging Faustus5's view on reductionism's everyday applicability*
- 2.395. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Defending rigorous philosophical definition of reductionism*
- 2.396. Steve3007: *Discussing technical vs layperson's definition of reductionism in scientific vocabulary*
- 2.397. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Faustus5 explains preference for technical philosophical definition of reductionism*
- 2.398. Terrapin Station: *Challenges of providing non–circular definitions on message boards*
- 2.399. GE Morton: *Defending qualia: Rejecting identity through semantic precision*
- 2.400. GE Morton: *Why mental phenomena can't be reductively explained by science*
- 2.401. Steve3007: *Defining 'physical' through sensory experience and past ostensive definitions*
- 2.402. evolution: *Seeking precise clarification in philosophical dialogue*
- 2.403. Terrapin Station: *Clarifying interest in philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge*
- 2.404. Terrapin Station: *Challenging epistemological universality in defining material concepts*
- 2.405. Steve3007: *Defending approach to defining physical concepts through sensory understanding*
- 2.406. Terrapin Station: *Ostensive definitions are circular and only work when pointing to exact referent*
- 2.407. Steve3007: *Learning through multiple examples and context, not just single point of reference*
- 2.408. Steve3007: *Exploring how people gain understanding of abstract terms like 'physical'*
- 2.409. Gertie: *Qualia not reducible: mental phenomena beyond scientific explanation*
- 2.410. Terrapin Station: *Clarifying personal definition of 'matter' beyond colloquial understanding*
- 2.411. Atla: *Physics' limitation in detecting qualia challenges mind–brain identity theory*
- 2.412. Steve3007: *Defining physical terms through empirical sensory patterns and experience*
- 2.413. Terrapin Station: *Questioning different senses of 'physical' term in ongoing debate*
- 2.414. Steve3007: *Probing understanding of abstract terminology acquisition*

- 2.415. Steve3007: *Seeking focused discussion on term comprehension*
- 2.416. GE Morton: *Physics vs qualia: challenging the notion that physics denies subjective experience*
- 2.417. Atla: *Critique of conflating physics' explanatory limits with ontological denial of qualia*
- 2.418. GE Morton: *Challenging semantic confusion in understanding word meanings and communication*
- 2.419. Steve3007: *Epistemological debate on defining terms and empirical ontology construction*
- 2.420. Terrapin Station: *Deflecting discussion on term definition*
- 2.421. GE Morton: *Theories as explanatory constructs: limits of understanding brain-experience generation*
- 2.422. evolution: *Acknowledging potential semantic differences in philosophical discourse*
- 2.423. GE Morton: *Scientific evidence of consciousness in bird brains: neural correlates and cognitive complexity*
- 2.424. Gertie: *Challenging materialist identity theory: experience, hard problem, and consciousness*
- 2.425. GE Morton: *Defending subjective experience as emergent feature of brain functioning*
- 2.426. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Dennett's scientism: Challenging subjective experience as separate from brain events*
- 2.427. Sculptor1: *Critiquing Faustus5's view on subjective experience and evolution*
- 2.428. Gertie: *Challenging homunculus theory through brain scan interpretations*
- 2.429. Sculptor1: *Defending neural activity as the essence of experience*
- 2.430. Gertie: *Responding to Gertie's critique of homunculus model*
- 2.431. GE Morton: *Defending qualia as measurable, meaningful brain phenomena*
- 2.432. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Challenging epiphenomenalism's causal role*
- 2.433. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Critiquing dualist interpretations of mental causation*
- 2.434. GE Morton: *Exploring self-model theory and brain consciousness mechanisms*
- 2.435. GE Morton: *Defending mental events as causal in scientific understanding*
- 2.436. Gertie: *Challenging homunculus theory: brain's self-observation mechanism not centralized*
- 2.437. 🌐 **Dennett**: *Dennett's stance: mental phenomena are physical brain events*
- 2.438. Terrapin Station: *Probing definition of 'physical' in mental phenomena discussion*
- 2.439. Steve3007: *Exploring different interpretations of 'physical' in scientific context*
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- 2.677. Sy Borg: *Philosophical exploration of consciousness, emergence, and systemic boundaries*
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- 2.684. Pattern-chaser: *Challenging perception of emergence as magical phenomenon*
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- 2.695. Atla: *Rejecting quantum mysticism around consciousness and wavefunction collapse*
- 2.696. Pattern-chaser: *Questioning role of conscious observer in quantum mechanics*
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- 2.701. Pattern-chaser: *Considering prior research on quantum information preservation*
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- 2.704. Atla: *Correcting previous statement on quantum manifestation*
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- 2.707. Sculptor1: *Dismissing speculative quantum consciousness theories*
- 2.708. Atla: *Rejecting unfounded claims about mental influence*
- 2.709. Sculptor1: *Challenging rhetorical language in discussion*
- 2.710. Pattern-chaser: *Asserting consciousness's role in quantum probability collapse*
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- 2.719. Atla: *Interpretation of quantum states beyond mathematical equations*
- 2.720. Leontiskos: *Critique of narrow view of philosophy as pragmatic problem-solving*
- 2.721. Leontiskos: *Defending philosophy's broader scope beyond scientific paradigms*
- 2.722. 🌿 Hereandnow: *Continental philosophy's approach to understanding being*
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- 2.724. Atla: *Critique of phenomenology's limited perspective on being*
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- 2.726. Atla: *Challenging phenomenology's claims about world's givenness*
- 2.727. Leontiskos: *Questioning phenomenology's fundamental philosophical approach*
- 2.728. Atla: *Exploring complexity of realism and anti-realism definitions*
- 2.729. Leontiskos: *Clarifying anti-realist skepticism and phenomenological perspectives*
- 2.730. Atla: *Representational consciousness and scientific model of experience*
- 2.731. Leontiskos: *Science's fundamental requirement of external world assumption*
- 2.732. Atla: *Impossibility of conceptualizing without assuming external world*
- 2.733. Sy Borg: *Exploring multiple perceptual worlds and interdisciplinary understanding*
- 2.734. Leontiskos: *Challenging anti-realist stance's compatibility with scientific inquiry*
- 2.735. Atla: *Rejecting fixed 'isness' and exploring world interpretation strategies*
- 2.736. Leontiskos: *Analyzing shifts in realist and anti-realist philosophical positions*

2.737. Sculptor1:

2.738. Atla: *Critiquing realism vs anti-realism as inadequate philosophical categories*

2.739. Leontiskos: *Concluding philosophical discussion on representation and reality*


3. Participate in Discussion

"On the Absurd Hegemony of Science"

A Debate of Scientism and Qualia with Daniel C. Dennett

Steve3007: "This topic is nothing if not popular."

"A book without an end... One of the most popular philosophy discussions in recent history."

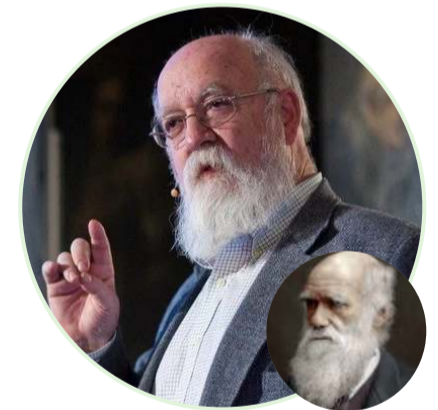
This eBook contains an index of the posts of an online discussion on **Online Philosophy Club** in which renowned philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett participated in defense of scientism and his rejection of  Qualia.

You can participate in the original discussion on onlinephilosophyclub.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=18123.

The discussion is available as eBook in PDF and ePub format.

Foreword

Witness renowned philosophy professor *Daniel C. Dennett's* passionate defense of "scientism" and his dismissal of metaphysical philosophical inquiry, famously declaring "*I have no interest at all in any of those folks. None whatsoever*" when presented with a list of philosophers who have grappled with these questions.



Charles Darwin or Daniel Dennett?

1.78. by Daniel C. Dennett

Dennett: "Any kind of philosophical discussion that ventures into ill defined, vague territory without any hope of solving genuine, real problems for actual human beings means nothing to me, so science is foundation enough."

1.82. by Hereandnow

"No, no, no. There is a LOT out there. You are just dismissive because your education is philosophically, ontologically rudderless, and this is because you don't read beyond science into science's and experience's underpinnings. Read Kant, Kierkegaard, Hegel (of whom I know less than others), Husserl, Fink, Levinas, Blanchot, Henry, Nancy (the French are extraordinary) Heidegger, Husserl, even Derrida, and others. THIS is where philosophy gets interesting."

Dennett: "I have no interest at all in any of those folks. None whatsoever." ~ 1.84.^

This gripping debate explores the limits of scientific knowledge and its relationship to human experience and value.

CHAPTER 1.2.

Evidence that Faustus5 is Daniel C. Dennett



The compelling evidence that user Faustus5 is indeed philosopher Daniel C. Dennett participating semi-openly in this debate is presented in detail in [this article](#).

For those interested in the views of Daniel C. Dennett. [Chapter 2.^ "Dennett's Defense of Qualia"](#) contains over 400 posts debating Dennett's rejection of  Qualia.

CHAPTER 1.3.

Openings Post

Hereandnow on  Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 1:06 PM

All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will. That is, even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts, the actual event is within an "aesthetic" context, i.e., experience: there is the interest, the thrill of being a scientist, of discovery, of positive peer review and so forth. The actual pure science *is an abstraction* from this (see, btw, Dewey's Art as Experience for a nice take on this. NOT to agree with Dewey in all things).



The whole from which this is abstracted is all there is, a world, and this world is in its essence, brimming with meaning, incalculable, intractable to the powers of the microscope. It is eternal, as all inquiry leads to openness, that is, you cannot pin down experience in propositional knowledge.

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

CHAPTER 1.4.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 11:38 PM



I get that what you write must make sense to you, but to me--and not just this post, but your posts in general--it just seems like a long string of nonsequiturs, a bunch of words that don't have much to do with each other.

For example, your first sentence says, "All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will."

And then your second sentence starts off with, "That is"--as if you're going to explain the first sentence in other words, but then what you say is, "even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts," and I don't see what that would have to do with "witnessing human drama." The two things just don't seem to go together. It seems like a wild leap from one thought to a completely different thought.

And then you say, "the actual event is within an 'aesthetic' context," which is even more mystifying, and then you write "i.e., experience," as if there's some connection between "events being within an 'aesthetic' context" and experience in general.

I just don't ever really know what you're on about, but I'm assuming it must make sense to you.

CHAPTER 1.5.

~

Hereandnow on  Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 1:45 AM

Terrapin Station wrote

I get that what you write must make sense to you, but to me--and not just this post, but your posts in general--it just seems like a long string of nonsequiturs, a bunch of words that don't have much to do with each other.



For example, your first sentence says, "All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will."

And then your second sentence starts off with, "That is"--as if you're going to explain the first sentence in other words, but then what you say is, "even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts," and I don't see what that would have to do with "witnessing human drama." The two things just don't seem to go together. It seems like a wild leap from one thought to a completely different thought.

And then you say, "the actual event is within an 'aesthetic' context," which is even more mystifying, and then you write "i.e., experience," as if there's some connection between "events being within an 'aesthetic' context" and experience in general.

I just don't ever really know what you're on about, but I'm assuming it must make sense to you.

I consider this an improvement on the usual disparagement even if you are just being nice.

The inspiration for this comes from John Dewey's *Art as Experience* and his *Experience and Nature*. To see the thinking here, one has to put down the notion that the world is handed to us as it is. We make the meanings when we think about the world. It is our logic, our language, emotions, our experiential construction of past to future, our caring, pain, joys and everything you can name, or predicate a property to, all is within experience. Reality is experience, and whatever there is out there that "causes" us to have the experiences we have is given in experience and we have never stepped out of this to observe the world, for to do so would be to step out of the logic and language that makes thought even possible.

If I want to know what an object is, the actual event in which this curiosity occurs is a complex matrix of experiential content. The curiosity has a setting in which I am motivated, and this is attached to previous experiences which fill out my past and make for a prior, anticipatory field of interests in which my motivations originate. There is drive there, ambition in the background. The curiosity "event" is just as affective as it is cognitive as it is egoic as it is.. All these (and of course more) are part of a whole, they are "of a piece". It requires an act of abstraction from the whole to the "part" (though thinking in "parts" here rather violates the idea) to think about reality being any thing at all, for once anything is taken up in thought, the abstracting process that makes thinking possible is in place.

Of course, this does not mean we cannot think responsibly about what the world is. But it does pin responsible thinking to an inclusiveness that science is not interested in doing. Science does not do ontology. It does not take the structure of experience itself as an object of study. Rather, it presupposes (or does not think at all about) such structures in order for it to do its business. So: a scientist wants to study Jupiter's atmosphere. What would this entail? The point here is that it would require nothing of the experience, full and complex, in the object of inquiry. Inquiry would be specific, exclusive, formulaic.

This explains why science is so ill suited for philosophical thought.

CHAPTER 1.6.

~

MAYA EL on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 5:33 AM

I agree

CHAPTER 1.7.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 9:05 AM

Hereandnow wrote:...But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

To help the discussion, could you give an example in which philosophy has, in your view, mistakenly or incorrectly yielded to science? What would it actually mean for philosophy, or anything else, to yield to science? Science is a formalization of the simple process of observing the world, spotting patterns and regularities in those observations and trying to use those regularities to predict future observations. What would it mean to yield to that?

CHAPTER 1.8.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 9:43 AM

I tend to agree with TS's analysis that most of the passages you write seem to be strings of nonsequiturs - sets of sentences that, judging by their arrangement, look as though they're supposed to be constructing an argument in which each sentence builds on what was said in the previous ones, but they don't. They look to me as though they're written more for poetic value than to try to make any kind of argument. It looks to me as though you construct a sentence on the basis of whether it sounds nice, and then construct another one on the same basis, without attempting to link it to the previous one. So you get a sequence of nice sounding but disconnected thoughts.

Nothing wrong with poetry, of course. But poetry isn't generally used to support a proposition such as "science has hegemony and it shouldn't". Yet that appears to be what you're trying to do. You appear to want to propose something and then support that proposition with an argument. Do you?

Sample from your previous post:

Hereandnow wrote:Of course, this does not mean we cannot think responsibly about what the world is. But it does pin responsible thinking to an inclusiveness that science is not interested in doing. Science does not do ontology.

As we know, ontology is the study of how things are and what things exist, as opposed to, for example, the study of how we know things or how things appears to be or the study of our experiences. So, "thinking about what the world is" would be thinking about onotology, yes? So in the first sentence above are you saying that science involves "thinking about what the world is"? If so, the last sentence contradicts this doesn't it?

It does not take the structure of experience itself as an object of study.

This, coming after "Science does not do ontology" would appear to be intended to build on/expand on that statement. You appear to be equating "ontology" with "taking the structure of experience itself as an object of study" (and saying that science does neither). But ontology is not about studying "the structure of experience" is it? It's not entirely clear what you mean by "studying the structure of experience", but it doesn't sound like ontology.

Rather, it presupposes (or does not think at all about) such structures in order for it to do its business. So: a scientist wants to study Jupiter's atmosphere. What would this entail? The point here is that it would require nothing of the experience, full and complex, in the object of inquiry. Inquiry would be specific, exclusive, formulaic.

So you propose that science presupposes "the structure of experience"? Studying Jupiter's atmosphere would entail looking at Jupiter's atmosphere. How does stating that "inquiry would be specific, exclusive, formulaic." relate to this? Are you saying that in order to study the atmosphere of Jupiter we should look at something other than the atmosphere of Jupiter? Or perhaps look at everything? Do you apply this to all study? Can you see that you're not making any kind of coherent argument here? Do you want to?

This explains why science is so ill suited for philosophical thought.

Not to me. The above assertion may well be right, but you certainly haven't constructed an argument to demonstrate it.

CHAPTER 1.9.

~

Sculptor1 on  Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 10:03 AM



1.3. by  Hereandnow

All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will. That is, even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts, the actual event is within an "aesthetic" context, i.e., experience: there is the interest, the thrill of being a scientist, of discovery, of positive peer review and so forth. The actual pure science is an abstraction from this (see, btw, Dewey's Art as Experience for a nice take on this. NOT to agree with Dewey in all things). The whole from which this is abstracted is all there is, a world, and this world is in its essence, brimming with meaning, incalculable, intractable to the powers of the microscope. It is eternal, as all inquiry leads to openness, that is, you cannot pin down experience in propositional knowledge.

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

You have not demonstrated that our hegemony is based on science.

You seem to imply, totally wrongly that science is absurd. Again, you have done nothing to support this.

Then you have implied that science does not know its place. Again, nothing but a bold assertion back up with nothing.

If I were to characterise our current hegemony in this arena I would point to the absurd hegemony of anti-science and pseudo-science which seem to infect socail media like a virus.

You vast claims for philosophy ignore the many occasions where philosphy has had to bow down to the discoveries of science and modify its ways.

CHAPTER 1.10.

~

Terrapin Station on  Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 10:52 AM



Your response to me makes a lot more sense to me than your initial post did, but it has way too much stuff to address. Seriously, there's enough material there for probably 100 different lengthy discussion threads.

Let's take just one claim:

1.5. by  Hereandnow

to do so would be to step out of the logic and language that makes thought even possible.

People say such things often, but it always seems very curious to me. It seems like there must be people who only think linguistically--because otherwise why would they make claims like "language is necessary to make thought even possible," but not everyone only thinks linguistically. Now, if there are people who only think linguistically, they probably won't believe that this is not the case for everyone, and there's probably not much we can do about that aside from working on

getting them to realize that it wouldn't have to be the case that all thinking is the same for all entities that can think. This is easier said than done, though, because there seems to be a common personality/disposition that has a hard time with the notion that not everyone is essentially the same.

Also, the notion that we can't observe or perceive things without actively thinking about them, a la applying concepts, applying meanings, having a linguistic internal commentary about them, etc. would need to be supported, but I don't know how we'd support that aside from simply brute-force, stomping-our-foot-down-and-not-budging claiming it. It's a lot like the claim that all thought is linguistic. Maybe some people's minds work so that they can't simply perceive things without applying concepts/meanings, etc., and again, they're just not going to believe that not everyone's mental experience is just like theirs.

But at any rate, I don't see how we can claim such things without needing pretty good supports of them over the contradictory claims (that not all thought is linguistic (and/or logical) and that not all perception is theory-laden, or accompanied by thoughts a la concepts, meanings, etc.)

CHAPTER 1.11.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 10:57 AM



Certainly claiming such things without good support and then just poetically, kind of stream-of-consciously transitioning to other obliquely-related ideas, also without good support, and then others and others and others, all linked with as many prepositional phrases as possible, all while avoiding periods for as long as possible, doesn't really work as philosophy in my opinion. 😊

CHAPTER 1.12.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 11:21 AM

HAN

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Maybe.

What the scientific method relies on is that there is a real world of stuff which our mental experience relates to, and we can know something about that stuff. Not perfectly or comprehensively, but well enough to pass the tests of inter-subjective agreement and

predictability.

And that has given us an incredibly complex, coherent and useful working model of a material world we share.

But you're right to say science doesn't know how to go about explaining mental experience - which all its claims are based in. Bit of a paradox that one. And imo suggests the fundamental nature of the universe is uncertain. Philosophy of mind is coming up with all kinds of speculations about the mind-body problem, but they remain inaccessible to testing - unless you have a surefire method?

Materialism has its own untestable philosophical hypotheses about how mental experience might be reducible to material processes, including philosophical thinking. If you think you have a better philosophical case, can you lay it out as simply and clearly as poss? (Serious request)

Because it's easy to spot the flaws with the all the hypotheses, not so easy to conclusively argue which one should be accepted as correct.

CHAPTER 1.13.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 11:24 AM



This is for everyone who has these issues, which is many of our posters with a continental bent (and I should probably make this a separate thread): it could be an issue of reading and thinking a great deal about this stuff, and your mind has a tendency to "race." That could easily lead to rambling writing that seems disconnected to readers.

You'd not want to change anything when writing your first draft, but when reading it back to yourself before posting (which hopefully everyone is doing), you need to take a deep breath, slow down, and remember that people aren't already "in your mind." They may not have read everything you've read. They certainly won't have had the same thoughts about it even if they did read it. They're not going to already know all of the interconnections you're thinking. And you need to be careful when it comes to interconnections, background assumptions, etc. that are second-nature to you--again, other people are not already in your mind, so these things probably won't be second-nature to *them*.

A good stance to assume is something like "Imagine that I'm addressing reasonably intelligent high school students who have no special background in what I'm talking about. If I put myself in their place while reading back what I wrote, would they be able to understand it and follow me? Am I presenting an argument that would seem plausible to them?" Your audience might have a much more extensive background in the subject matter than this, but it doesn't hurt to assume that they do not.

It's a bit similar to the idea of needing to "show your work" in mathematics class. The teacher already knows how to work out the problem, and they'll often know that *you* know how to work it

out, too, but there's value, including for your own thinking, in setting a requirement to spell out just how you're arriving at the conclusions you're arriving at. That can seem laborious, perhaps, but if you're really saying something that would be worthwhile for other people to read and think about, isn't it worth putting the work in?

CHAPTER 1.14.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 12:26 PM

Gertie wrote:What the scientific method relies on is that there is a real world of stuff which our mental experience relates to, and we can know something about that stuff. Not perfectly or comprehensively, but well enough to pass the tests of inter-subjective agreement and predictability.

It doesn't even really rely on that. Obviously we believe, for perfectly sensible reasons, that it is true that there is this real world of stuff. But the scientific method doesn't rely on its existence. All it relies on is the existence of patterns in our observations. That the existence of those patterns is a result of the fact that the observations are of objectively existing things may be true, but I wouldn't say it's relied on as such. The scientific method can study anything with a pattern.

CHAPTER 1.15.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 12:53 PM



1.14. by Steve3007

It doesn't even really rely on that. Obviously we believe, for perfectly sensible reasons, that it is true that there is this real world of stuff. But the scientific method doesn't rely on its existence. All it relies on is the existence of patterns in our observations.

What we should say there is "all it relies on is the existence of patterns in my observations." As soon as we posit other people that we can interact with, and that we can know we can interact with, we're positing a real world of (some sort of) stuff.

CHAPTER 1.16.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 1:02 PM

Terrapin Station wrote:What we should say there is "all it relies on is the existence of patterns in my observations." As soon as we posit other people that we can interact with, and that we can know we can interact with, we're positing a real world of (some sort of) stuff.

True.

CHAPTER 1.17.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 1:09 PM

1.16. by Steve3007

Terrapin Station wrote: What we should say there is "all it relies on is the existence of patterns in my observations." As soon as we posit other people that we can interact with, and that we can know we can interact with, we're positing a real world of (some sort of) stuff.

True.

OK, I'll go with that.

CHAPTER 1.18.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 2:36 PM



Steve3007 wrote

To help the discussion, could you give an example in which philosophy has, in your view, mistakenly or incorrectly yielded to science? What would it actually mean for philosophy, or anything else, to yield to science? Science is a formalization of the simple process of observing the world, spotting patterns and regularities in those observations and trying to use those regularities to predict future observations. What would it mean to yield to that?

First, it's not about the scientific method, which I use to put on my shoes in the morning. This kind of thinking we associate with science has its basis in everyday life and there is no escaping this unless one breaks with living itself. It is the hypothetical deductive method and it is distinctively tied to a pragmatic structure of experience. It is future looking, just as experience is inherently future looking (in our Heraclitean world)

Empirical reductive thinking is what I have in mind. By this I mean a dismissiveness of what cannot be confirmed in "observation" (keeping in mind that the term observation is not in itself this prohibitive). Philosophy is apriori, not empirical, and so it takes the world as it is given in empirical science and elsewhere (observations of mental events) and asks, what is required in order for this to be the case? For experience has structure, there are questions about the origin of experience, paradoxes that arise on the assumption that empirical observation is the foundation of knowledge such as: From whence comes knowledge of the world? Observation. What IS this? Brain activity (keeping it short). So when you observe a brain it is brain activity doing the observing? Yes. Then what confirms the brain activity that produces the conclusion that it is brain activity that produces empirical observations. Brain activity. A brain is confirmable as an observation based entity, and

that makes it just as empirical as everything else. It is contingent, therefore, in need of something else to confirm IT. That is, it has no foundation, nothing beneath it, and to ignore this is simply to take a wrong turn.

Science cannot discuss ethics. Of course, the scientific method is always in place, and one can produce a hedonic calculator to determine utility, but ethics is not a demonstrable science for value is not empirical. The WHAT is ethics?, of course, is what I am talking about. Not the what to do about it.

Science as a touchstone of what is Real systematically leaves out finitude/eternity, transcendence, metaphysics, ontology, the inevitable foundationlessness of all enterprises: the reason why these sound so alien to your common sense is not because they have no presence in the world or inherent fascination bearing content. Rather, it is because these have been systematically put out of relevance, utterly side lined by the technological success and the endless, unquestioning business it produces. We are, as a science infatuated culture, endlessly distracted, and meaning has become trivialized in this. *We just assume there is nothing to see because the meanings I am talking about are not empirical.*

And my complaint goes on. As to who, I suppose it would be the Daniel Dennetts, the Richard Dawkins', the analytic tradition that rests with the assumption that parallels that of empirical science: to know is to know MORE. and more is parasitical on empirical science.

My take is that philosophy is already done. It has shown us that there is no progress to make empirically. The finale: science presupposes value. Why bother with ANYthing? The answer we seek in philosophy is not cognitive, but affective. Not more, but more penetrating. What we seek in all our endeavors is not distraction but consummation of what we are, and this rests with value, not propositional knowledge, but affect, meaning.

CHAPTER 1.19.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 2:41 PM



1.18. by *Hereandnow*

Philosophy is apriori, not empirical,

As we suddenly dismiss a huge percentage of philosophers, haha.

CHAPTER 1.20.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 2:43 PM



1.3. by [Hereandnow](#)

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

I can't disagree with you, but I fear the analytical/science/objective crew will object. They don't like it when anyone even implies that there are areas of knowledge that science cannot address. I wish you luck! 😊

CHAPTER 1.21.

~

[Terrapin Station](#) on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 2:48 PM



What an a priori approach can tell you about is how the philosopher in question happens to think. The mental dispositions they have. It makes it like autobiographical psychological analysis.

CHAPTER 1.22.

~

[Pattern-chaser](#) on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 2:59 PM



1.9. by [Sculptor1](#)

you have implied that science does not know its place.

It's not "science" that has done this, it's its practitioners and followers. Science has achieved a huge amount. This can be empirically verified, and I see no need to justify it further. It has been (and remains) so successful that it is often applied when it is not the appropriate tool for the job. This is not the fault of science. And when politicians claim they're 'following the science', as they have done recently, this is often another misapplication of science.

Science is a great invention, and it has proved its worth time after time. Science is, IMO, a Good Thing. But it is not universally applicable. I think this topic is attempting to address the misapplication of science, not to attack science of itself. This topic stands in direct opposition to those who claim that science is the only acceptable tool to investigate and understand life, the universe, and everything. [Yes, there are such people.]

Just my two pennyworth. 😊



Hereandnow on  Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 3:00 PM



Steve3007 wrote

As we know, ontology is the study of how things are and what things exist, as opposed to, for example, the study of how we know things or how things appears to be or the study of our experiences. So, "thinking about what the world is" would be thinking about onotology, yes? So in the first sentence above are you saying that science involves "thinking about what the world is"? If so, the last sentence contradicts this doesn't it?

I defend a phenomenologist's definition of ontology: what IS, is a process (one way to put it). To even bring up a thing as existing is to do so in a process of thought, experience and to think beyond this, to some affirmation of what Really is, is bad metaphysics; an empty spinning of wheels. Ontology is a term that reminds me of Kuhn's "paradigm": taken up everywhere once achieved popularity. These days, marketers, education theorists, everyone talks about an ontology of this or that, and by this they mean what something is foundationally in their field. But philosophical ontology is tricky. In my thinking (always, already derivative) ontology is a study of the structures of experience. It is reductive talk about everything, and a scientist's reductive talk would be physicalism or materialism, mine is process: for materialism presupposes the process of thought that produces the very idea. ALL things presuppose this, and this is why process thinking (Heraclitus' world) is AS reductive as one can get. It is the bottom line of analysis just prior to going religious.

This, coming after "Science does not do ontology" would appear to be intended to build on/expand on that statement. You appear to be equating "ontology" with "taking the structure of experience itself as an object of study" (and saying that science does neither). But ontology is not about studying "the structure of experience" is it? It's not entirely clear what you mean by "studying the structure of experience", but it doesn't sound like ontology

The assumption is, one cannot step outside of experience; the very thought is absurd. And experience is not a thing. Things appear before us, IN experience, but **thingness** presupposes experience. What IS foundational, is not a thing, but the process in which things are recognized as things. I think we live in interpretation of things, and this interpretation is also what things essentially are.

So you propose that science presupposes "the structure of experience"? Studying Jupiter's atmosphere would entail looking at Jupiter's atmosphere. How does stating that "inquiry would be specific, exclusive, formulaic." relate to this? Are you saying that in order to study the atmosphere of Jupiter we should look at something other than the atmosphere of Jupiter? Or perhaps look at everything? Do you apply this to all study? Can you see that you're not making any kind of coherent argument here? Do you want to?

All thinking is about something. If we are looking for what philosophy should be about, we find that empirical science is too exclusive of the body of what the world is. Philosophy needs to be about the most general, inclusive perspective. To get to this level, one has to put aside the incidentals, the tokens, if you will, of what the world is, and physics, biology and the rest becomes tokens of the broader inclusiveness.

Not to me. The above assertion may well be right, but you certainly haven't constructed an argument to demonstrate it.

The only way to do that would be to address all of your issues on the matter. That takes time.

CHAPTER 1.24.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 3:02 PM



1.22. by Pattern-chaser

1.9. by Sculptor1

you have implied that science does not know its place.

It's not "science" that has done this, it's its practitioners and followers. Science has achieved a huge amount. This can be empirically verified, and I see no need to justify it further. It has been (and remains) so successful that it is often applied when it is not the appropriate tool for the job. This is not the fault of science. And when politicians claim they're 'following the science', as they have done recently, this is often another misapplication of science.

Science is a great invention, and it has proved its worth time after time. Science is, IMO, a Good Thing. But it is not universally applicable. I think this topic is attempting to address the misapplication of science, not to attack science of itself. This topic stands in direct opposition to those who claim that science is the only acceptable tool to investigate and understand life, the universe, and everything. [Yes, there are such people.]

Just my two pennyworth.

I wouldn't say it's the only applicable tool (heck, I wouldn't have studied philosophy otherwise), but I'd say that science, just like philosophy, is applicable to everything. The differences are in the methodologies, not in what are apt or inapt focuses for those methodologies.

CHAPTER 1.25.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 3:07 PM



1.24. by Terrapin Station

1.22. by Pattern-chaser

Science is a great invention, and it has proved its worth time after time. Science is, IMO, a Good Thing. But it is not universally applicable. I think this topic is attempting to address the misapplication of science, not to attack science of itself. This topic stands in direct opposition to those who claim that science is the only acceptable tool to investigate and understand life, the universe, and everything. [Yes, there are such people.]

I wouldn't say it's the only applicable tool (heck, I wouldn't have studied philosophy otherwise), but I'd say that science, just like philosophy, is applicable to everything. The differences are in the methodologies, not in what are apt or inapt focuses for those methodologies.

Yes and no. Science is not applicable to metaphysics, morality or religion, for a start. That's not a shortcoming of science. No tool can address every task.

CHAPTER 1.26.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 3:14 PM



Sculptor1 wrote

You have not demonstrated that our hegemony is based on science.

You seem to imply, totally wrongly that science is absurd. Again, you have done nothing to support this.

Then you have implied that science does not know its place. Again, nothing but a bold assertion back up with nothing.

If I were to characterise our current hegemony in this arena I would point to the absurd hegemony of anti-science and pseudo-science which seem to infect socail media like a virus.

You vast claims for philosophy ignore the many occaisons where philosphy has had to bow down to the discoveries of science and modify its ways.

I would ask you to read more closely and dispassionately. I never even hinted that science was absurd. The bold assertions may have issues. I wonder, what are they?

Social media? Look, you have others matters bearing on this that I have no part in. If you want to raise another related problem, then I am pretty much open to anything. I come here to argue; I like thinking and writing. So argue a case. My thinking is overreaching because....; empirical science odes provide adequate paradigms for philosophical matters because....

CHAPTER 1.27.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 4:19 PM

Hereandnow wrote:To even bring up a thing as existing is to do so in a process of thought

Ontology, as conventionally understood, is the study of what exists. Obviously being "the study" means that "the study of Ontology" is a process of thought. That doesn't mean that Ontology is about thought. That would be like saying that woodwork is not about working wood. It's about thinking about woodwork.

The assumption is, one cannot step outside of experience

The assumption of what? Of science? That would be like saying that the assumption of woodwork is that one cannot step outside of wood. Science, by definition, is largely about sensory experiences in the sense that it is empirical. That doesn't mean you can't "step outside". If you want to try to do that in some way you're free to do so. You just won't be doing science then. There's no law saying that you have to.

All thinking is about something. If we are looking for what philosophy should be about, we find that empirical science is too exclusive of the body of what the world is. Philosophy needs to be about the most general, inclusive perspective. To get to this level, one has to put aside the incidentals, the tokens, if you will, of what the world is, and physics, biology and the rest becomes tokens of the broader inclusiveness.

You're talking as if somebody has told you that philosophy has to be all about science. Obviously it doesn't. But obviously it makes sense for it to be informed by science's findings for the same reason that it makes sense for it to be informed by any other findings.

So I still don't see what the point of the OP is. Its title seems to suggest that it's a defense of the proposition "Science has hegemony and that's absurd". But maybe it isn't. I'm none the wiser!

CHAPTER 1.28.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 4:22 PM

I never even hinted that science was absurd.

But its hegemony is, yes?

CHAPTER 1.29.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 4:22 PM

Terrapin Station wrote

Your response to me makes a lot more sense to me than your initial post did, but it has way too much stuff to address. Seriously, there's enough material there for probably 100 different lengthy discussion threads.



Sure, but it is, if you pardon the locution, thematically limited. There are specific claims and specific ideas.

Let's take just one claim:

Hereandnow wrote: ↑Yesterday, 9:45 pm

to do so would be to step out of the logic and language that makes thought even possible.

People say such things often, but it always seems very curious to me. It seems like there must be people who only think linguistically--because otherwise why would they make claims like "language is necessary to make thought even possible," but not everyone only thinks linguistically. Now, if there are people who only think linguistically, they probably won't believe that this is not the case for everyone, and there's probably not much we can do about that aside from working on getting them to realize that it wouldn't have to be the case that all thinking is the same for all entities that can think. This is easier said than done, though, because there seems to be a common personality/disposition that has a hard time with the notion that not everyone is essentially the same.

In order for me to make sense of this, you would have to make sense of thought without logic or language. Thinking is defined by what we find in the world. There is instinct, motor habits, reflexes, what a feral child might possess, true. The feral child would be the most interesting.

At any rate, it is not so much the explicit use of logic and language that is being argued here, but the structure of experience itself: Get up in the morning, see the time in the clock on the wall, anticipate your affairs for the day, and so on. All of this has the structure of rational organization. Unspoken "knowledge" is implicit assertions, conditionals, negations and so on. And this rests with what is already there, in memory that constitutes one's familiarity with the world. Memory, recollection, repetition, recognition, habit, these are experiential matters that are descriptive of the cow in the meadow, not making any thought, part of the experiential "world".

Also, the notion that we can't observe or perceive things without actively thinking about them, a la applying concepts, applying meanings, having a linguistic internal commentary about them, etc. would need to be supported, but I don't know how we'd support that aside from simply brute-force, stomping-our-foot-down-and-not-budging claiming it. It's a lot like the claim that all thought is linguistic. Maybe some people's minds work so that they can't simply perceive things without applying concepts/meanings, etc., and again, they're just not going to believe that not everyone's mental experience is just like theirs.

That IS an interesting point. I would argue that one cannot perceive without apperceiving. When an infant lies in the crib, there is already, as soon as synaptic connections are completed and events in the womb recorded, an apperceptive presence, hence, a person, albeit a thinly constructed one. But what makes the whole affair recognizable, a case of experiencing reality is the combination of the familiarity of apperception and the essential features of the mind, which are cognitive, affective and so on. It is exactly the opposite of what I argue to say that there are "faculties" of reason as if the whole possessed this rational machinery. Rather, it is a stream that can be analyzed, and the analysis yields an abstraction from the whole.

If there is no presence of logic, does this preclude assertions and the rest? Even a non symbolic mentality, as with that of a cow, has a proto rationality: it looks up from a worn patch of ground for greener places, associates green with food; and the other typical behavior. It could be argued that in all this prelinguistic behavior, the "knowing" cow is in possession of a kind of protologic. But this doesn't really go to the matter about experience as the final ground for reductive attempts.

But at any rate, I don't see how we can claim such things without needing pretty good supports of them over the contradictory claims (that not all thought is linguistic (and/or logical) and that not all perception is theory-laden, or accompanied by thoughts a la concepts, meanings, etc.)

I would argue all thought is theory laden. One only has to first define theory as a forward looking interpretative position, and then, simply examine non problematic examples of thought. After all, it is from this examination that we even have a discipline called logic at all. Logic is *inferred* from experience.

CHAPTER 1.30.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 4:28 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

Certainly claiming such things without good support and then just poetically, kind of stream-of-consciously transitioning to other obliquely-related ideas, also without good support, and then others and others and others, all linked with as many prepositional phrases as possible, all while avoiding periods for as long as possible, doesn't really work as philosophy in my opinion. 😊

It is method of analysis, and the "good support" you seek lies in the argument itself. What is there, in our midst as experiencing people, is taken up and looked at to see what sense can be made of it. This is why logic is a philosophical discipline: the proof lies in the thought constructions about the way we think. It is a step backwards, asking, well, what does this presuppose if it is true? it is not at all unlike other thinking in that we analyze all the time, only here, it is basic questions, basic assumptions.

CHAPTER 1.31.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 8:08 PM



1.22. by Pattern-chaser

1.9. by Sculptor1

you have implied that science does not know its place.

It's not "science" that has done this, it's its practitioners and followers. Science has achieved a huge amount. This can be empirically verified, and I see no need to justify it further. It has been (and remains) so successful that it is often applied when it is not the appropriate tool for the job. This is not the fault of science. And when politicians claim they're 'following the science', as they have done recently, this is often another misapplication of science.

Science is a great invention, and it has proved its worth time after time. Science is, IMO, a Good Thing. But it is not universally applicable. I think this topic is attempting to address the misapplication of science, not to attack science of itself. This topic stands in direct opposition to those who claim that science is the only acceptable tool to investigate and understand life, the universe, and everything. [Yes, there are such people.]

Just my two pennyworth.

I think you might want to direct that to the person who opened the thread.

C H A P T E R 1 . 3 2 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 8:09 PM

1.23. by Hereandnow

In my thinking (always, already derivative) ontology is a study of the structures of experience.

Depends what you mean by that. Technically, experience has no actual structure, just as the outside world has no actual structure. (Probably.) Our own mind/thinking is/creates that apparent structure, but it's not set in stone, for example I frequently change the structure of my experiences using various techniques.

Avoiding such traps is one reason why philosophy shouldn't be purely a priori.

C H A P T E R 1 . 3 3 .

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 8:21 PM

Sadly science has no hegemony.

Take a look at Trump's administration. He still thinks he's running 'The Apprentice', as he fired the most knowledgeable man in the field of infectious diseases.

He can't read a graph and the people seem to honour him for his willful stupidity and anti-science on a range of topics.



CHAPTER 1.34.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 8:48 PM



1.25. by *Pattern-chaser*

Yes and no. Science is not applicable to metaphysics, morality or religion, for a start. That's not a shortcoming of science. No tool can address every task.

On my view metaphysics is the same thing as ontology, and ontology is simply about the nature of what exists--that's certainly what science does, it just uses a different methodology than philosophy.

Morality and religion are about certain types of human beliefs, dispositions and behavior. We can definitely study those things scientifically, too.

CHAPTER 1.35.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Friday, August 21, 2020 at 8:41 AM

Pattern-chaser wrote: Science is not applicable to metaphysics, morality or religion, for a start.

You could perhaps say that it's not applicable to the *practice* of morality and religion, at least, but it could be applicable to the *study* of them if they exhibit any kinds of patterns that might be used to construct descriptive and/or predictive theories. So, for example, if we noticed that various people tend to hold similar moral views we could create theories to try to predict what moral views some other people might hold and perhaps propose underlying causes for them holding those views. i.e. we could do sociology or anthropology.

There are some scientists who have opined that a similar relationship applies between philosophy and science. i.e. that philosophy is no use to the practice of science:

Richard Feynman wrote: Philosophy of science is as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds

But of course ornithology is still useful. Just not to birds.

CHAPTER 1.36.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Friday, August 21, 2020 at 12:03 PM



1.35. by Steve3007

Pattern-chaser wrote: Science is not applicable to metaphysics, morality or religion, for a start.

You could perhaps say that it's not applicable to the practice of morality and religion, at least, but it could be applicable to the study of them if they exhibit any kinds of patterns that might be used to construct descriptive and/or predictive theories. So, for example, if we noticed that various people tend to hold similar moral views we could create theories to try to predict what moral views some other people might hold and perhaps propose underlying causes for them holding those views. i.e. we could do sociology or anthropology.


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*Richard Feynman wrote: Philosophy of science is as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds
But of course ornithology is still useful. Just not to birds.*

Here's one quote of Feynman I do not agree with.
Any bird who understood ornithology would rule the skies.

CHAPTER 1.37.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 12:38 PM



1.35. by Steve3007

Pattern-chaser wrote: Science is not applicable to metaphysics, morality or religion, for a start.

You could perhaps say that it's not applicable to the practice of morality and religion, at least, but it could be applicable to the study of them if they exhibit any kinds of patterns that might be used to construct descriptive and/or predictive theories. So, for example, if we noticed that various people tend to hold similar moral views we could create theories to try to predict what moral views some other people might hold and perhaps propose underlying causes for them holding those views. i.e. we could do sociology or anthropology.

There are some scientists who have opined that a similar relationship applies between philosophy and science. i.e. that philosophy is no use to the practice of science:

*Richard Feynman wrote: Philosophy of science is as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds
But of course ornithology is still useful. Just not to birds.*

Yeah, science is obviously not identical to every activity, but science can study everything and anything that exists, just like philosophy can.

CHAPTER 1.38.

~



Gertie wrote

What the scientific method relies on is that there is a real world of stuff which our mental experience relates to, and we can know something about that stuff. Not perfectly or comprehensively, but well enough to pass the tests of inter-subjective agreement and predictability.

And that has given us an incredibly complex, coherent and useful working model of a material world we share.

But you're right to say science doesn't know how to go about explaining mental experience - which all its claims are based in. Bit of a paradox that one. And imo suggests the fundamental nature of the universe is uncertain. Philosophy of mind is coming up with all kinds of speculations about the mind-body problem, but they remain inaccessible to testing - unless you have a surefire method?

Materialism has its own untestable philosophical hypotheses about how mental experience might be reducible to material processes, including philosophical thinking. If you think you have a better philosophical case, can you lay it out as simply and clearly as poss? (Serious request)

Because it's easy to spot the flaws with the all the hypotheses, not so easy to conclusively argue which one should be accepted as correct.

It is not about testing and verification and reliability and the like. These are fundamental to all we do (put your socks on. How did you do that? A repeatedly confirmed theory about the way physical things behave, about moving the arm and hands in this way to produce a specific event. The method of science is unassailable and is simply the method of living and breathing.

And to the waste bin with mind body matters. This is a false ontological problem because it can only make sense if you can say what mind and body are such that they would be different things ontologically--but the very nature of an ontological question goes to a question of Being, what IS, and here, there are no properties to distinguish. In existence there are many different things, states, all distinguished by what we can say about them. We don't believe these differences constitute differences OF Being, just differences IN Being.

Regarding the serious request:

To establish a truly foundational ontology, one has to look where things that assume a foundation have their implicit assumptions. All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes, so the question then is, what is language and logic? the OP says these belong to experience, and experience has a structure, and this structure is one of time. Past, present future. Thought and its "method" has a temporal structure, the anticipating of results when specified conditions are in place (hence, the success in repeatedly tying my shoes properly). Science is, technically speaking, all about what-will-happen if there is this, or that in place, or if one does this or that. Science doesn't have a problem; we ARE the scientific method in a very real way, in every anticipation of our lives there is a history of a learned associations between what we do and what will happen. This is what cognition is.

Time is the foundation of Being, but it is not Einstein's time (an empirical concept based on observation) but structural time, the structure of Being itself in the experience that produces

existence, OUR existence, that is, which is a temporal one. time that structures our experience is not beyond experience and Einstein conceived of relativity in the temporally structured world of experience. Outside of this structure this time does not exist (unless it is in some other such experientially structured time, as with God, but this is an arbitrary idea).


Science's failure to be sufficient for philosophical thinking is not in the method, but in the content. I mean, even if I went full subjective into the deep recesses of my interiority and actually found God and the soul, this would be IN time, in an ability to anticipate the next moment, bring up memories, see that the usual is not the case here in order to have a contextual setting that I can recognize God as God. The rub lies with science's paradigms that are exclusively specialized and empirical and ignore the phenomenon of experience as it is. It takes parts of experience and reifies them into being-foundations. To me this is akin to taking knitting, a specialized "part" as well, and defining the existence in terms of the yarn and needle.

Philosophy is supposed to take the most basic and inclusive perspective in which one has pulled away from the "parts" and attempts to be about the whole, and the whole is experience structured in time, and then the matter turns to WHAT is there. Everything. Nothing excluded: love affairs, hatreds, our anxieties, our ethics, tragedies, and so on: all conceived structurally in time and as the WHAT of existence. All is, to use a strange term, equiprimordial, meaning no one is reducible to any other. Our affairs are not reducible to physical realities, but physical realities belong to a specialized language scientists use, or we all use in a casual way. Evolution is not in any way held suspect, to give an example. It is a very compelling theory. But other actualities are not reducible to this, do not have their explanatory basis in this.

It is science's hegemony that leads us to a position that denies the world's "parts" their rightful ontological status. And if any hegemony should rise, it should be based on what it IS, its "presence" as an irreducible actuality. Of course, this is the presence of affectivity (affect), the very essence of meaning itself.

CHAPTER 1.39.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:19 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

As we suddenly dismiss a huge percentage of philosophers, haha.

It's only to say that philosophers don't sit in labs studying empirical data. Remember, Richard Dawkins is not a philosopher, not that I disagree with what that he says; I'm just saying what he does say is not philosophy. This does, I am aware, make the question of what philosophy is an issue. Oh well.

CHAPTER 1.40.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:22 PM



Pattern-chaser wrote

I can't disagree with you, but I fear the analytical/science/objective crew will object. They don't like it when anyone even implies that there are areas of knowledge that science cannot address. I wish you luck!

I don't disagree with the power of the scientific method. I told Gertie this is not something one can dismiss. It is their theoretical paradigms are absurdly overreaching.

CHAPTER 1.41.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:40 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

What an a priori approach can tell you about is how the philosopher in question happens to think. The mental dispositions they have. It makes it like autobiographical psychological analysis.

Oh, no, no. Logic itself is apriori inferred from experience and judgment.

CHAPTER 1.42.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:42 PM



1.38. by Hereandnow

All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes

How would we provisionally verify versus falsify a claim like that?

CHAPTER 1.43.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:54 PM




1.31. by Sculptor1

I think you might want to direct that to the person who opened the thread.

I thought the OP aimed at the way science is practised, not at science itself, as you suggested. I responded to you.

CHAPTER 1.44.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:56 PM



1.42. by Terrapin Station

1.38. by Hereandnow

All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes

How would we provisionally verify versus falsify a claim like that?

If we were being constructive, maybe we wouldn't bother trying to prove it right or prove it wrong, but simply discuss the claim made. Is it a useful claim? Does it advance the discussion? And so on.

Just a thought.

CHAPTER 1.45.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 2:01 PM



1.44. by Pattern-chaser

1.42. by Terrapin Station

How would we provisionally verify versus falsify a claim like that?

If we were being constructive, maybe we wouldn't bother trying to prove it right or prove it wrong, but simply discuss the claim made. Is it a useful claim? Does it advance the discussion? And so on.

Just a thought.

As always, it's not about proof, because we can't prove any empirical claim period. It's about why we'd believe it rather than alternatives. It's possible that All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes, and it's possible that NOT all science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes. So then the question is "Why would we believe one of those claims over the other?" And then what's the answer to that? That's what I'm looking for. That's the sort of thing we should be doing if we're doing philosophy. Not just making claims with no support. We should

be supporting them by talking about the reasons that we'd believe a claim over the contradictory claim.

CHAPTER 1.46.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 2:02 PM



I should add that the reason I'm interested in this is that when I read something like, "All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes," I think, "Hmm . . . that doesn't seem to be very clearly the case. So why would I believe it?" I'm certainly not going to believe that it's the case just because someone is saying that it is. They need to have better reasons to believe the claim than that.

If I didn't think this way, I'd have zero interest in philosophy in the first place.

CHAPTER 1.47.

~

Sculptor1 on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 2:09 PM



1.43. by *Pattern-chaser*

1.31. by *Sculptor1*

I think you might want to direct that to the person who opened the thread.

I thought the OP aimed at the way science is practised, not at science itself, as you suggested. I responded to you.

I think it would be worthwhile for him to respond to your points, which I am basically in agreement with.


As far as your distinction; not sure there is one since science is a practice, its practice defines what it is.

My basic objection is that it in no way forms an hegemony; would that it did.

We would have a more rational world being based on verifiable truth rather than rumour or faith.

CHAPTER 1.48.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 3:52 PM



Steve3007 wrote

Ontology, as conventionally understood, is the study of what exists. Obviously being "the study" means that "the study of Ontology" is a process of thought. That doesn't mean that Ontology is about thought. That would be like saying that woodwork is not about working wood. It's about thinking about woodwork.

The question of ontology asks us to look at what IS, but when the question is asked, the what IS is already conceived in the asking as an idea, recollected language, logical construction and an already existing sense of what there is that needs inquiry. You don't go into the matter ex nihilo, nor does any possible response arise this way. This "isness" or Being you seek an accounting of must be there in experience beforehand, for the asking, but then, what is "there"? The idea here, in part, is that we cannot conceive of what that could be without the attendant ideas that make conception possible. Once you drop thought, in other words, you drop understanding, and this makes things "as they are", beyond the scope of language, utterly ineffable, transcendental. If you take this kind of thing seriously, transcendence, you step into another, very odd and interesting, if you ask me, world. The fact that you can ask the question about such non linguistic apprehensions of the what IS *that is not a nonsense question* opens a very strange door in philosophy that is beyond the scope of this discussion.

The point I want to make does touch on this, though: the rational grasp of something delimits that thing, brings it to heel, removes the thing from what would otherwise be without understanding altogether because unconditioned by thought. This, one might say, is one aspect of a rationalized world and it is part of empirical science's hegemonic bias, given that science wants this above all: logical clarity. But while logical clarity does work in the affairs of science where things are quantitatively conceived, it is a very rough go regarding the entire theater of human affairs where a standard of clarity applying to our horrors, joys, loves, fears, the very things that stand out to inquiry in need of understanding is absurd. Hence a movement in philosophy called existentialism.

The assumption of what? Of science? That would be like saying that the assumption of woodwork is that one cannot step outside of wood. Science, by definition, is largely about sensory experiences in the sense that it is empirical. That doesn't mean you can't "step outside". If you want to try to do that in some way you're free to do so. You just won't be doing science then. There's no law saying that you have to.

No. I'm saying one cannot step out of experience because sense cannot be made of such a thing. To step outside of something implies that where one is stepping makes sense to be stepped into. I can make sense of stepping out of woodwork, but I cannot make sense of stepping out of experience for that would be stepping out of making sense itself.

You're talking as if somebody has told you that philosophy has to be all about science. Obviously it doesn't. But obviously it makes sense for it to be informed by science's findings for the same reason that it makes sense for it to be informed by any other findings.

So I still don't see what the point of the OP is. Its title seems to suggest that it's a defense of the proposition "Science has hegemony and that's absurd". But maybe it isn't. I'm none the wiser!

Someone told me? Well, not personally. I read.

Maybe? I mean, look at the arguments. What do you think about its specific issues. This is just being dismissive.

CHAPTER 1.49.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, August 21, 2020 at 4:39 PM



Atla wrote

Depends what you mean by that. Technically, experience has no actual structure, just as the outside world has no actual structure. (Probably.) Our own mind/thinking is/creates that apparent structure, but it's not set in stone, for example I frequently change the structure of my experiences using various techniques.

Avoiding such traps is one reason why philosophy shouldn't be purely a priori.

But you don't change the having of motivations, grief, anxiety, logic, engagements, and so on; you can ignore these, become a monk and they can all just fall away from experience, but then, are you still human? People who actually do this kind of thing talk in terms alien to existence.

As to philosophy being apriori, it is no more than looking at presuppositions OF what you might find in science. A scientist looks at data regarding, say, plate tectonics to study movements of the earth's crust. Looking at data: what is this? What is in the looking, studying, analyzing, comparing, and so forth? There is reason. What is this? How is this evidenced to be posited? It is in the very form of a given judgment: logical form. Can one separate logic from what logic in observation tells you about the world? After all, logic is a matter of apriority, so how can this be about an object when knowledge of objects is all posteriori knowledge?

Now you're deep into an apriori analysis of an empirical claim. It is not second guessed by the empirical claim, but is altogether a different kind of question about a different kind of issue.

CHAPTER 1.50.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, August 21, 2020 at 4:45 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

How would we provisionally verify versus falsify a claim like that?

One would simply observe the nature of language and logic. This is done by taking the various propositional forms and analyzing them, and determining what they are, as in assertions, denials, conditionals and the rest. You cannot say, Eureka, there is life on Mars! unless you can make a statement in the form of an assertion.

~

Atla on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 5:13 PM1.49. by [Hereandnow](#)

But you don't change the having of motivations, grief, anxiety, logic, engagements, and so on; you can ignore these, become a monk and they can all just fall away from experience, but then, are you still human? People who actually do this kind of thing talk in terms alien to existence.

Whose existence? Shouldn't philosophy cover all of existence, including the various kinds of not fully human humans?

As to philosophy being apriori, it is no more than looking at presuppositions OF what you might find in science. A scientist looks at data regarding, say, plate tectonics to study movements of the earth's crust. Looking at data: what is this? What is in the looking, studying, analyzing, comparing, and so forth? There is reason. What is this? How is this evidenced to be posited? It is in the very form of a given judgment: logical form. Can one separate logic from what logic in observation tells you about the world? After all, logic is a matter of apriority, so how can this be about an object when knowledge of objects is all posteriori knowledge?

Now you're deep into an apriori analysis of an empirical claim. It is not second guessed by the empirical claim, but is altogether a different kind of question about a different kind of issue.

How do you know that logic is a matter of apriority? So far, the entire known universe seem to behave in a way that's consistent/compatible with human classical logic. Maybe apriori human logic evolved to reflect how the universe around us behaves.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 5:47 PM

Atla wrote

Whose existence? Shouldn't philosophy cover all of existence, including the various kinds of not fully human humans?



Of course. Would like to include stones, animals, spiders? Yes, they are included. But in doing this, have you made any alteration in the argument? Living things like us are considered only to the extent a characterization is warranted. A stone: One can only say what one observes and there is no interior to a stone that can be accessed. An animal? We are not as dogs and cats and the rest are animals, so the best we can do infer what it would be like from what we are, given a similarity in observable constitutions but this is the best we can do. As to other people, we also infer from what we experience to others, and are right about a lot of things for observations seem to match up. But then, even with animals and other people, we cannot see into their interiors, so we infer what they are like.

How do you know that logic is a matter of apriority? So far, the entire known universe seem to behave in a way that's consistent/compatible with human classical logic. Maybe apriori human logic evolved to reflect how the universe around us behaves.

But to even speculate about such a thing requires you to employ your reason. Keep in mind that if the universe were to behave in odd ways, it would not be apriority that was threatened, but simply our observations and the consistency they have thus far yielded. To imagine a world where logic itself is upended is to imagine world beyond logical possibility, modus ponens doesn't really work. Such a thing is beyond imagination. Important is that logic is IN the structure of the thoughts you use to construct your suspicions about logic. There really is no way out of meaningful discussions requiring apriori logical form.

CHAPTER 1.53.

~

Atla on  Friday, August 21, 2020 at 7:18 PM

1.52. by *Hereandnow*

Of course. Would like to include stones, animals, spiders? Yes, they are included. But in doing this, have you made any alteration in the argument? Living things like us are considered only to the extent a characterization is warranted. A stone: One can only say what one observes and there is no interior to a stone that can be accessed. An animal? We are not as dogs and cats and the rest are animals, so the best we can do infer what it would be like from what we are, given a similarity in observable constitutions but this is the best we can do. As to other people, we also infer from what we experience to others, and are right about a lot of things for observations seem to match up. But then, even with animals and other people, we cannot see into their interiors, so we infer what they are like.

Alteration in what argument?

But to even speculate about such a thing requires you to employ your reason. Keep in mind that if the universe were to behave in odd ways, it would not be apriority that was threatened, but simply our observations and the consistency they have thus far yielded. To imagine a world where logic itself is upended is to imagine world beyond logical possibility, modus ponens doesn't really work. Such a thing is beyond imagination. Important is that logic is IN the structure of the thoughts you use to construct your suspicions about logic. There really is no way out of meaningful discussions requiring apriori logical form.

Well, sure.

(I don't know what your point is.)

CHAPTER 1.54.

~

Terrapin Station on  Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 1:49 PM



One would simply observe the nature of language and logic.

??? But "All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes " is a claim about *science*, it's not a claim about language and logic.

If we said, "All dogs are black," and someone said, "How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim," we wouldn't respond by saying, "One would simply observe the *nature of black*"! We have to observe *dogs*, and check whether they're all black or not, because it's a claim about the properties of dogs, not the properties of colors. Likewise, you made a claim about the properties of science, not the properties of language and logic.

This is done by taking the various propositional forms and analyzing them, and determining what they are, as in assertions, denials, conditionals and the rest. You cannot say, Eureka, there is life on Mars! unless you can make a statement in the form of an assertion.

Of course you can not say something without using language. But that's aside from the issue of whether all science is a construct of language and logic. Would you be suggesting that we can not do science without saying something? Could a person who can't speak, write (or sign, etc.) be incapable of doing science? How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim?

(And note by the way that the claim, "*is a construct of*" is different than if we were simply to say, "*is done with the aid of.*")

CHAPTER 1.55.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 3:29 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

??? But "All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes " is a claim about science, it's not a claim about language and logic.

If we said, "All dogs are black," and someone said, "How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim," we wouldn't respond by saying, "One would simply observe the nature of black"! We have to observe dogs, and check whether they're all black or not, because it's a claim about the properties of dogs, not the properties of colors. Likewise, you made a claim about the properties of science, not the properties of language and logic.

I am saying language and logic is foundational for science; it is presupposed by it. The verification or falsification of whether a dog is black would certainly require empirical confirmation, but then, the question here would go to the verification of the empirical claim itself, qua empirical claim. This brings one to, not another observation of an empirical nature, but an analysis of what it is for something to be empirical at all (hence, the apriori nature of philosophy: what is assumed, presupposed by X).

Of course you can not say something without using language. But that's aside from the issue of whether all science is a construct of language and logic. Would you be suggesting that we can not do science without saying something? Could a person who can't speak, write (or sign, etc.) be incapable of doing science? How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim?

(And note by the way that the claim, "is a construct of" is different than if we were simply to say, "is done with the aid of.")

You can tie your shoes without language, but it would be closer to what a cow does when it looks for greener pasture. Science is symbolic work, and yes, you cannot do this without language. Science is a body of factual propositions, and propositions are inherently linguistic.

You could verify versus falsify this by asking how physics could be possible without language and logic. You would have to demonstrate this: give examples of science and show how these are free, or can be, of language.

CHAPTER 1.56.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 3:46 PM



1.55. by  Hereandnow

Terrapin Station wrote

??? But "All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes " is a claim about science, it's not a claim about language and logic.

If we said, "All dogs are black," and someone said, "How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim," we wouldn't respond by saying, "One would simply observe the nature of black"! We have to observe dogs, and check whether they're all black or not, because it's a claim about the properties of dogs, not the properties of colors. Likewise, you made a claim about the properties of science, not the properties of language and logic.

I am saying language and logic is foundational for science; it is presupposed by it. The verification or falsification of whether a dog is black would certainly require empirical confirmation, but then, the question here would go to the verification of the empirical claim itself, qua empirical claim. This brings one to, not another observation of an empirical nature, but an analysis of what it is for something to be empirical at all (hence, the apriori nature of philosophy: what is assumed, presupposed by X).

Of course you can not say something without using language. But that's aside from the issue of whether all science is a construct of language and logic. Would you be suggesting that we can not do science without saying something? Could a person who can't speak, write (or sign, etc.) be incapable of doing science? How would we provisionally verify versus falsify that claim?

(And note by the way that the claim, "is a construct of" is different than if we were simply to say, "is done with the aid of.")

You can tie your shoes without language, but it would be closer to what a cow does when it looks for greener pasture. Science is symbolic work, and yes, you cannot do this without language. Science is a body of factual propositions, and propositions are inherently linguistic.

You could verify versus falsify this by asking how physics could be possible without language and logic. You would have to demonstrate this: give examples of science and show how these are free, or can be, of language.

So if you were trying to figure out how to best hunt an animal, say, and you did that by observing its behavior -- where it goes at different times of the day, how it reacts to sounds and so on, so that you can make predictions about the best way to hunt it, you wouldn't call that a scientific approach? Because you could do that without language, and certainly language (or logic) wouldn't be "constructing" it.

CHAPTER 1.57.

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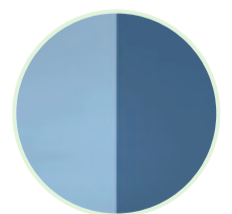
Consul on  Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 8:11 PM

1.5. by  Hereandnow

Science does not do ontology.

QUOTE>

"A physical theory should clearly and forthrightly address two fundamental questions: what there



is, and what it does. The answer to the first question is provided by the *ontology* of the theory, and the answer to the second by its *dynamics*. The ontology should have a sharp mathematical description, and the dynamics should be implemented by precise equations describing how the ontology will, or might, evolve."

(Maudlin, Tim. *Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. p. xi)

"(I)f 'ontology' just means 'the study of what exists' or 'the study of things', as opposed to the study of knowledge, don't the sciences qualify for that label? Doesn't the physicist study the existing things of the physical world? And similarly for all the other sciences: don't they all study a certain class of existing things—biology, astronomy, psychology, and so on? There are various entities in reality and the various sciences study the nature of those entities—planets, organisms, subjects of consciousness, and so on. Isn't a scientist by definition an ontologist? The answer must surely be yes: the scientist studies the order of being, or a certain category of beings. He or she wants to know what kinds of being exist, how they should be classified, how they work, what laws or principles govern them. Science is therefore a kind of ontology—a systematic study of what is, why it is, and what it is. Science is the study of being (not the study of nonbeing). But, then, granted the synonymy of 'ontology' and 'metaphysics' (as that term is now understood), science is also metaphysics. There is no *contrast* between science and metaphysics; science is a special case of metaphysics. The physicist is a metaphysician (= ontologist), quite literally, even when his concerns are thoroughly of this world. Theories of motion, say, are metaphysical theories—because they are ontological theories (not epistemological theories). Darwin had a metaphysical theory of life on Earth. There are metaphysical facts, like the rotation of the Earth or the boiling point of water. Philosophers also do metaphysics, of course, but they do so in the company of scientists: we are all practicing metaphysicians, for we all study being. We all do what Aristotle was doing in the book he wrote after writing the *Physics*. We study objective reality in a rigorous and systematic way, aiming to produce a general picture of things, seeking to keep bias and human idiosyncrasy out of it.

...

This is not to deny any distinction between the kind of metaphysics (ontology) that philosophers do and the kind that scientists do. There are all sorts of distinctions between the kinds of metaphysics the various students of the world engage in—physicists or biologists, chemists or philosophers. No doubt every field differs from all the others in *some* way. There are many ways to be an ontologist, i.e. metaphysician, though that is what we all are. It is a matter of controversy what constitutes the philosophical kind of ontologist—especially what kind of methodology he or she adopts. Some see themselves as continuous with the scientific ontologists, perhaps arranging their several results into a big perspicuous ontological map. Some rely on the method of conceptual analysis to further their ontological goals. Others appeal to a special faculty of ontological intuition (they tend to be frowned upon by their tougher-minded laboratory-centered ontological colleagues). Aristotle understands his enterprise as differing from that of other ontologists merely in respect of generality. Where the physicist investigates substances of one kind—physical substances—the philosophical ontologist investigates the general category or substance. Where the chemist looks for the cause of particular chemical reactions, the philosopher looks at the nature of causation in general. These restricted ontologists want to know the nature of particular physical and chemical substances and causes; the philosophical ontologist wants to know the

nature of substances and causation in general. They are both studying the same thing—being, reality—but they study it at different levels of generality. Thus philosophical metaphysics is fundamentally the same kind of enterprise as scientific metaphysics—though, of course, there are differences of method and scope. All are correctly classified as metaphysics (not epistemology or axiology). That is the right descriptive nomenclature to adopt."

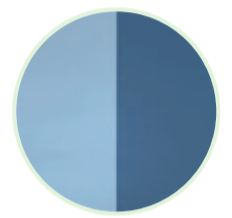
(McGinn, Colin. "Science as Metaphysics." In *Philosophical Provocations: 55 Short Essays*, 215–218. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017. pp. 216–7)

<QUOTE

CHAPTER 1.58.

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Consul on 🕒 Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 8:18 PM



1.57. by Consul

QUOTE>

"A physical theory should clearly and forthrightly address two fundamental questions: what there is, and what it does. The answer to the first question is provided by the ontology of the theory, and the answer to the second by its dynamics. The ontology should have a sharp mathematical description, and the dynamics should be implemented by precise equations describing how the ontology will, or might, evolve."

(Maudlin, Tim. *Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. p. xi)

<QUOTE

Footnote:

The noun "ontology" is used both as a count noun referring to what exists according to a theory (= those entities to which it is ontologically committed) and as a noncount noun referring to the theoretical discipline called "ontology".

CHAPTER 1.59.

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Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 8:55 PM



Consul wrote

Footnote:

The noun "ontology" is used both as a count noun referring to what exists according to a theory (= those entities to which it is ontologically committed) and as a noncount noun referring to the theoretical discipline called "ontology".

Read through those quotes. One thing I do not say in these posts, and this is because I am explicitly trying to avoid the off putting name dropping, is that I hold the position that Heidegger's (and other derivative views) phenomenological ontology is the only one that satisfies the condition of at once encompassing all that "is" and avoiding the tedious, what Rorty might call, hypostatization of language. Heidegger considers all non phenomenological ontologies as *merely ontic, or pre ontological, and here, in the everydayness of science and daily affairs, one can use the term at will, but it will not be authentic philosophical ontology*. I try to put Rorty and Heidegger together: what IS, is a ready hand, pragmatic field of possibilities and choice. I cannot even begin to understand what materialism is about outside of the pragmatic meaning it has in the, to borrow from Heidegger, primordial grounding.

Of course, to oppose this view is to argue its explanatory deficits.

CHAPTER 1.60.

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Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 8:57 PM

ready to hand



CHAPTER 1.61.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 2:56 AM



Terrapin Station wrote

So if you were trying to figure out how to best hunt an animal, say, and you did that by observing its behavior--where it goes at different times of the day, how it reacts to sounds and so on, so that you can make predictions about the best way to hunt it, you wouldn't call that a scientific approach? Because you could do that without language, and certainly language (or logic) wouldn't be "constructing" it.

Making predictions without an understanding of a logical conditional? It is not the formal study of symbolic logic that is part of the hunter's knowledge, but the logical form of thought that allows assertions, negations, conditionals, and the rest. Remember, logic and all of its forms is derived from judgments we make every day. As children, it is modeled by everyone around us from a very early age. Of course, there is the feral child and it makes interesting speculation to ask how one like this might anticipate a storm, say, or know there is danger. the way this is approached is to say that we are given as part of our hard wiring the a logical ability, evidenced in the way we think and make judgments, but it takes experience to bring this out. Otherwise, it remains in latency.

You could buy the pragmatist epistemology that says all thought is essentially grounded hypothetical deductive method, which simply means you walk into a given circumstance, and the reason you know what to do is the ready to hand activation of a memory. Before you actually arrive at the mailbox, you are already prepared to engage, putting the fingers to the latch, pulling just so,

and the rest. The situation is the present actuality of something familiar. Hard to put this in the small space of a post, but all language is like this, and all logical forms that eventually manifest are inherently anticipatory. To be conscious at all, is to anticipate. The exception to this, you might say, would be in meditation yoga, but here, of course, the whole idea is the termination of the self and its language.

At any rate, my idea here is that it is not logic and language so much as the whole of experience itself that needs to be recognized and theorized about in philosophy.

CHAPTER 1.62.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 1:12 PM



1.47. by Sculptor1

As far as your distinction; not sure there is one since science is a practice, its practice defines what it is.

Science is also a reservoir of learning, and I think it reasonable to compare this reservoir with the practitioners who use it (or claim to).

1.47. by Sculptor1

My basic objection is that it in no way forms an hegemony; would that it did.

We would have a more rational world being based on verifiable truth rather than rumour or faith.

As for the hegemony, the facts are there in our societies and our world, to be observed. We could argue about matters of degree, but to what point? 😐

We would have a more rational world, but would it be a world that is more acceptable to us humans, to live in? 😐 Or would we prefer a world more in accord with our emotional and *irrational* needs? 😐
😐 For myself, I would not wish to live in a world where Spock and Mr Data are considered role models.

CHAPTER 1.63.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 1:32 PM



1.62. by Pattern-chaser

1.47. by Sculptor1

As far as your distinction; not sure there is one since science is a practice, its practice defines what it is.

Science is also a reservoir of learning, and I think it reasonable to compare this reservoir with the practitioners who use it (or claim to).

1.47. by Sculptor1

*My basic objection is that it in no way forms an hegemony; would that it did.
We would have a more rational world being based on verifiable truth rather than rumour or faith.*

As for the hegemony, the facts are there in our societies and our world, to be observed. We could argue about matters of degree, but to what point? 😐

*We would have a more rational world, but would it be a world that is more acceptable to us humans, to live in? 😐 Or would we prefer a world more in accord with our emotional and irrational needs? 😐😐
For myself, I would not wish to live in a world where Spock and Mr Data are considered role models.*

Strawman.

Spock and Data are fictional.

I'd prefer, say, that Trump listened to the US's expert on infectious diseases, rather than give him the sack for telling inconvenient truths.

I'd also prefer that the rational fact of GW were on the table rather than the to and fro political wrangling that goes on concerning carbon footprints and carbon credits, and the irrational hysteria on both sides.

Suffice it to say, given the thread topic - science does not have the hegemony.

CHAPTER 1.64.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 1:37 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

So if you were trying to figure out how to best hunt an animal, say, and you did that by observing its behavior--where it goes at different times of the day, how it reacts to sounds and so on, so that you can make predictions about the best way to hunt it, you wouldn't call that a scientific approach? Because you could do that without language, and certainly language (or logic) wouldn't be "constructing" it.

Making predictions without an understanding of a logical conditional? It is not the formal study of symbolic logic that is part of the hunter's knowledge, but the logical form of thought that allows assertions, negations, conditionals, and the rest. Remember, logic and all of its forms is derived from judgments we make every day. As children, it is modeled by everyone around us from a very early age. Of course, there is the feral child and it makes interesting speculation to ask how one like this might anticipate a storm, say, or know there is danger. the way this is approached is to say that we are given as part of our hard wiring the a logical ability, evidenced in the way we think and make judgments, but it takes experience to bring this out. Otherwise, it remains in latency.

You could buy the pragmatist epistemology that says all thought is essentially grounded hypothetical deductive method, which simply means you walk into a given circumstance, and the reason you know what to do is the ready to hand activation of a memory. Before you actually arrive at the mailbox, you are already prepared to engage, putting the fingers to the latch, pulling just so, and the rest. The situation is the present actuality of something familiar. Hard to put this is the small space of a post, but all language is like this, and all logical forms that eventually manifest are inherently anticipatory. To be conscious at all, is to anticipate. The exception to this, you might say, would be in meditation yoga, but here, of course, the whole idea is the termination of the self and its language.

At any rate, my idea here is that it is not logic and language so much as the whole of experience itself that needs to be recognized and theorized about in philosophy.

You're not really addressing anything I brought up though.

First I was wondering if you were saying what I described would count as science or not. You didn't address that.

Secondly, do you not buy that what I was describing could be accomplished where the person has no language? If you don't buy that, why not?

Third, I said that there was a difference between "is a construct of" and "is done with the aid of." You never addressed that when I first brought it up, but as I noted above, in the hunting scenario, even if logic is used in the observations, that's different than saying that the process is a construct of logic. You didn't address that here.

CHAPTER 1.65.

~

Terrapin Station wrote

First I was wondering if you were saying what I described would count as science or not.

You didn't address that.

Secondly, do you not buy that what I was describing could be accomplished where the person has no language? If you don't buy that, why not?



Your question was about whether one could hunt and not take a scientific approach in doing so, and if science presupposes language, and hunting is a kind of science and hunting can be conceived as a nonlinguistic activity, then such thing would be a counterexample to language being presupposed by science.

This is what I took you to be saying. You mentioned making predictions specifically. A prediction is a logical conditional: you predict based on what you have observed in the past, and make an inference based on this about what will happen in the future. This has the logical form of a conditional proposition: If..., then....; so, if the rabbit ran that way, then it will encounter a lake and will have clear alternatives....Such a prediction pulls out memories about lakes, rabbits, and all, what they have been like in the past, plus knowledge that rabbits don't swim, and everything else, then projects them onto the given situation.

Now, all of this has an obvious logical form *in the description I gave* (I hope this is clear) for conditionals' logical form of if..., then,...is the very form of modus ponens itself (though not exhaustively so). But in the actual practice, is this logic and language essential? What about spontaneous, nondiscursive "doing", carrying out something. I did bring this up in the example of the feral child/person, the cow lifting its head looking for greener pastures, but not explicitly saying to itself anything of a logical nature at all. So, if it can be shown that what these kinds of entities are doing is both scientific in nature and nonlinguistic/allogical, then this would counter the idea that science presupposes language and logic.

Can one make a non logical affirmation that the rabbit could go this way and not that? First, there is a contradiction built into this, for assertions are inherently logical. So, it would not be an assertion at all. We say a cow is an instinctual creature, but instinct is not really an analytic term, that is, it doesn't really describe what happens in the event, the anticipating, the alternatives understood; it comes to the point that in questions as to whether such an affair is sans logic, that the description itself requires an ascription of logic to the hunter. the hunter must "understand" but what is this if not either an underlying but very clear logical presence, or, in the case of a feral mentality, a nascent logicity. This is why I brought up the idea of latency.

I bring in my comments about the hypothetical deductive (HD) method, which is essentially, the scientific method. HD is a method, and the reason I say a mere post cannot possibly cover this is because it's complicated. Logic is the form of thought, but so is time. To explicitly NOT put too fine a point on this: experience (my OP baseline of what a true ontology must really be about) is always in time, has time as an inherent structure, and this means experience has a conditional at its core, If...,then,... The point I'm making is that in science, this too, and even, especially this, is presupposed by science, yet not part of the way science conceives the world.

Third, I said that there was a difference between "is a construct of" and "is done with the aid of." You never addressed that when I first brought it up, but as I noted above, in the hunting scenario, even if logic is used in the observations, that's different than saying that the process is a construct of logic. You didn't address that here.

See the above. "With the aid of" and "a construct of" are both logical, linguistic, experiential affairs.

CHAPTER 1.66.

~

Hereandnow on  Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 5:59 PM



Sculptor1 wrote

Strawman.

Spock and Data are fictional.

I'd prefer, say, that Trump listened to the US's expert on infectious diseases, rather than give him the sack for telling inconvenient truths.

I'd also prefer that the rational fact of GW were on the table rather than the to and fro political wrangling that goes on concerning carbon footprints and carbon credits, and the irrational hysteria on both sides.

Suffice it to say, given the thread topic – science does not have the hegemony.

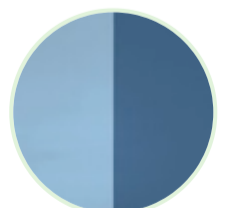
That is, in philosophical thinking, science does not have hegemony. In the world of practical matters, science reigns over all. Further, even in philosophical matters, the scientific method is doubted. Such a thing would be impossible.

As to your comments about Trump, go ahead, speak your mind. See if things hold up. Inconvenient truths?

CHAPTER 1.67.

~

Consul on  Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 7:15 PM



Read through those quotes. One thing I do not say in these posts, and this is because I am explicitly trying to avoid the off putting name dropping, is that I hold the position that Heidegger's (and other derivative views) phenomenological ontology is the only one that satisfies the condition of at once encompassing all that "is" and avoiding the tedious, what Rorty might call, hypostatization of language. Heidegger considers all non phenomenological ontologies as merely ontic, or pre ontological, and here, in the everydayness of science and daily affairs, one can use the term at will, but it will not be authentic philosophical ontology. I try to put Rorty and Heidegger together: what IS, is a ready hand, pragmatic field of possibilities and choice. I cannot even begin to understand what materialism is about outside of the pragmatic meaning it has in the, to borrow from Heidegger, primordial grounding.

Of course, to oppose this view is to argue its explanatory deficits.

Husserl distinguishes between *formal ontology*, which deals with being (existence/reality) as a whole, and *material/regional ontology* or ontologies, which deal with particular parts of being. The ontologies of the sciences are regional or local or special ontologies, as opposed to universal or global or general or basic/fundamental ontology.

QUOTE>

"According to Heidegger, the question of the meaning of Being, and thus Being as such, has been forgotten by 'the tradition' (roughly, Western philosophy from Plato onwards). Heidegger means by this that the history of Western thought has failed to heed the ontological difference, and so has articulated Being precisely as a kind of ultimate being, as evidenced by a series of namings of Being, for example as idea, energeia, substance, monad or will to power. In this way Being as such has been forgotten. So Heidegger sets himself the task of recovering the question of the meaning of Being. In this context he draws two distinctions between different kinds of inquiry. The first, which is just another way of expressing the ontological difference, is between the ontical and the ontological, where the former is concerned with facts about entities and the latter is concerned with the meaning of Being, with how entities are intelligible as entities. Using this technical language, we can put the point about the forgetting of Being as such by saying that the history of Western thought is characterized by an 'onticization' of Being (by the practice of treating Being as a being). However, as Heidegger explains, here in the words of Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, "an ontic knowledge can never alone direct itself 'to' the objects, because without the ontological... it can have no possible Whereto" (translation taken from Overgaard 2002, p.76, note 7). The second distinction between different kinds of inquiry, drawn within the category of the ontological, is between regional ontology and fundamental ontology, where the former is concerned with the ontologies of particular domains, say biology or banking, and the latter is concerned with the a priori, transcendental conditions that make possible particular modes of Being (i.e., particular regional ontologies). For Heidegger, the ontical presupposes the regional-ontological, which in turn presupposes the fundamental-ontological."

Martin Heidegger: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/>

<QUOTE

First of all, there is no being (*Sein*) qua existence (*Dasein*) or essence (*Sosein*) which isn't the being of any being(s) (*Seiendem*). There is no Being behind or beyond the totality of entities.

What I don't like about his (phenomenological) ontology is its anthropocentrism. His concept of *Dasein* is the concept of (subjective) human existence; and with his *Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein* (question of the meaning of being) he's doing either linguistics/semiology—*what is the meaning of "being"?*—or ethics/axiology—*what does being mean to me/us? / what is the value of being?*—, so he's no longer doing ontology in Aristotle's sense.

CHAPTER 1.68.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 8:33 PM



1.66. by [Hereandnow](#)

Sculptor1 wrote

Strawman.

Spock and Data are fictional.

I'd prefer, say, that Trump listened to the US's expert on infectious diseases, rather than give him the sack for telling inconvenient truths.

I'd also prefer that the rational fact of GW were on the table rather than the to and fro political wrangling that goes on concerning carbon footprints and carbon credits, and the irrational hysteria on both sides.

Suffice it to say, given the thread topic – science does not have the hegemony.

That is, in philosophical thinking, science does not have hegemony. In the world of practical matters, science reigns over all. Further, even in philosophical matters, the scientific method is doubted. Such a thing would be impossible.

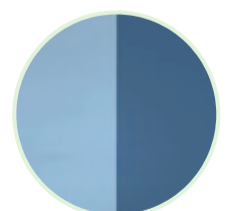
As to your comments about Trump, go ahead, speak your mind. See if things hold up. Inconvenient truths?

Where is your hegemony of science please?

CHAPTER 1.69.

~

Consul on  Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 8:38 PM



1.35. by [Steve3007](#)

*Richard Feynman wrote: Philosophy of science is as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds
But of course ornithology is still useful. Just not to birds.*

Ornithology is useful to birds because ornithological knowledge is useful to bird conservation.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, August 23, 2020 at 8:43 PM

1.69. by Consul

1.35. by Steve3007

But of course ornithology is still useful. Just not to birds.

Ornithology is useful to birds because ornithological knowledge is useful to bird conservation.


Anthropology is useful to people. Scientists should know what the basis of their statements mean, and some of the history of epistemology and empiricism. They would do well to be versed in Popper's work and Kuhn too.

Feynman was a smart guy. This statement is BS.

Like I said above. Any bird that understood ornithology would rule the skies.

Feynman was just dead wrong.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 4:45 AM

Consul Wrote

First of all, there is no being (Sein) qua existence (Dasein) or essence (Sosein) which isn't the being of any being(s) (Seiendem). There is no Being behind or beyond the totality of entities.

If you could make any sense of what beings are without an analytic of being, what substance is, what materiality is; I mean, if substance, for example, as a functioning ontological concept is supposed be the furthest one can go in the search for an explanatory foundation for all things, an authentic comprehensive philosophical ontology, then there should be no meaningful questions begged, yet we know that logically prior to this is the system of meaning making, human dasein, an analyzable basis of all concepts and experience; that is, one cannot even think of substance without thinking of the concept of substance. What is this? Such a thing, as with all concepts, was abstracted from experience.


What I don't like about his (phenomenological) ontology is its anthropocentrism. His concept of Dasein is the concept of (subjective) human existence; and with his Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein (question of the meaning of being) he's doing either linguistics/semiology—what is the meaning of "being"?—or ethics/axiology—what does being mean to me/us? / what is the value of being?—, so he's no longer doing ontology in Aristotle's sense.

But it's not anthropocentric. That would be a "regional" term belonging to the way we generally think of things, to use his language, proximally and for the most part; ontic, not ontology at all.

The question in my mind is simple: what logically presupposes what? Only hermeneutics can say this. There is no foundation of the Aristotelian kind at the level of ontology. Analytic philosophers don't like to hear this, but Kant was never refuted, only ignored.

CHAPTER 1.72.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 5:19 AM



Sculptor1 wrote

Where is your hegemony of science please?

My complaint is that no science can provide an explanatory basis for things in general, but people think like this all the time. They think the world is what science says it is and beyond this, there is only what the pending "paradigmatic scientific revolutions" will eventually yield.

This kind of thinking doesn't even provide the proper starting place for a true explanatory basis of the world. One has to ignore what science says, that is, suspend this (epoche) and look to what science presupposes in order to get to a foundation. And what one finds in this approach is that all things properly analyzed presuppose something they are not; they are endlessly deferential. I say cat and you ask me what this is, and I have other ideas in the waiting, and for those I have other ideas, and this never stops. foundations all are deferential, so there are no foundations. Science's world of empirical concepts are the same.

The only true foundation is the endless deferential nature of all knowledge claims, and instead of substance or materiality, we have no archimedean point to "leverage" meaning. The advantage this brings to the understanding is it undoes this blind confidence in scientific thinking *at the foundational level* (certainly not regarding how to send people to Mars or make a better cell phone). the upshot is the encouragement of an all inclusiveness of ontological priorities: there is no longer any privilege given to traditional ontologies, keeping in mind that privileging of this kind forces interpretations of our affairs to be "of" or "issue from" the privileged idea. The mysteries and the affectivity and all the things that human experience IS, are restored to a nonreductive place.

CHAPTER 1.73.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 11:39 AM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.72. by [Hereandnow](#)

My complaint is that no science can provide an explanatory basis for things in general, but people think like this all the time. They think the world is what science says it is and beyond this, there is only what the pending "paradigmatic scientific revolutions" will eventually yield.

Can you articulate so much as one practical disadvantage or hurt that is caused by thinking this way?

1.72. by  Hereandnow

This kind of thinking doesn't even provide the proper starting place for a true explanatory basis of the world.

Can you point out so much as one "proper" starting place for a "true explanatory basis of the world" that has successfully satisfied basic human curiosity and basic human needs to the degree than science has?

1.72. by  Hereandnow

And what one finds in this approach is that all things properly analyzed presuppose something they are not; they are endlessly deferential.

So what? Why should anyone care?

1.72. by  Hereandnow

The advantage this brings to the understanding is it undoes this blind confidence in scientific thinking at the foundational level (certainly not regarding how to send people to Mars or make a better cell phone).

How is this an advantage? Can you articulate so much a single improvement to anyone's life that follows from suddenly lacking this "confidence"?

CHAPTER 1.74.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 12:19 PM



1.72. by  Hereandnow

Sculptor1 wrote

Where is your hegemony of science please?

My complaint is that no science can provide an explanatory basis for things in general, but people think like this all the time. They think the world is what science says it is and beyond this, there is only what the pending "paradigmatic scientific revolutions" will eventually yield.

Science only describes the world and in that description explanations emerge.

But what else is there?

There is no explanation for things in general what ever that means.

WHY are "THEY" to whom you refer? Without some sort of evidence you are just trying to caricature "some people", unspecified.

At least science extropolates from evidence. That is maybe something you could take from science?

This kind of thinking doesn't even provide the proper starting place for a true explanatory basis of the world.

A bold statement, with nothing behind it.

One has to ignore what science says, that is, suspend this (epoche) and look to what science presupposes in order to get to a foundation. And what one finds in this approach is that all things properly analyzed presuppose something they are not; they are endlessly deferential. I say cat and you ask me what this is, and I have other ideas in the waiting, and for those I have other ideas, and this never stops. foundations all are deferential, so there are no foundations. Science's world of empirical concepts are the same.

You seem to be struggling here.

The only true foundation is the endless deferential nature of all knowledge claims, and instead of substance or materiality, we have no archimedean point to "leverage" meaning.

It's amusing to me that you think you know "the only true foundation", but have failed to demonstrate what that is, and why it might be better than verifiability and falsification.

The advantage this brings to the understanding is it undoes this blind confidence in scientific thinking at the foundational level (certainly not regarding how to send people to Mars or make a better cell phone). the upshot is the encouragement of an all inclusiveness of ontological priorities: there is no longer any privilege given to traditional ontologies, keeping in mind that privileging of this kind forces interpretations of our affairs to be "of" or "issue from" the privileged idea. The mysteries and the affectivity and all the things that human experience IS, are restored to a nonreductive place.

A bit of a word salad here. You start this passage with an "it", without a clear idea of what this "it" is. I assume you mean "endless deferential nature of all knowledge claims". What about "American IS great again"? What about "vaccines are evil"? What about "there is no global warming"; "the ozone layer is fine"; "CFCs are harmless"; "polio, typhoid, typhus, measles, AIDS, scrofula, and plague are the works of the devil and evil spirits"? "ALL" is a very big category!

CHAPTER 1.75.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 1:24 PM



1.65. by [Hereandnow](#)

Terrapin Station wrote

First I was wondering if you were saying what I described would count as science or not. You didn't address that.

Secondly, do you not buy that what I was describing could be accomplished where the person has no language? If you don't buy that, why not?

Your question was about whether one could hunt and not take a scientific approach in doing so, and if science presupposes language, and hunting is a kind of science and hunting can be conceived as a nonlinguistic activity, then such thing would be a counterexample to language being presupposed by science.

This is what I took you to be saying. You mentioned making predictions specifically. A prediction is a logical conditional:

Stop there for a moment. What does this have to do with *language*?

CHAPTER 1.76.

~

Gertie on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 1:45 PM

Gertie wrote

What the scientific method relies on is that there is a real world of stuff which our mental experience relates to, and we can know something about that stuff. Not perfectly or comprehensively, but well enough to pass the tests of inter-subjective agreement and predictability.

And that has given us an incredibly complex, coherent and useful working model of a material world we share.

But you're right to say science doesn't know how to go about explaining mental experience – which all its claims are based in. Bit of a paradox that one. And imo suggests the fundamental nature of the universe is uncertain. Philosophy of mind is coming up with all kinds of speculations about the mind-body problem, but they remain inaccessible to testing – unless you have a surefire method?

Materialism has its own untestable philosophical hypotheses about how mental experience might be reducible to material processes, including philosophical thinking. If you think you have a better philosophical case, can you lay it out as simply and clearly as possible? (Serious request)

Because it's easy to spot the flaws with all the hypotheses, not so easy to conclusively argue which one should be accepted as correct.

It is not about testing and verification and reliability and the like. These are fundamental to all we do (put your socks on. How did you do that? A repeatedly confirmed theory about the way physical things behave, about moving the arm and hands in this way to produce a specific event. The method of science is unassailable and is simply the method of living and breathing.

And to the waste bin with mind body matters. This is a false ontological problem because it can only make sense if you can say what mind and body are such that they would be different things ontologically – but the very nature of an ontological question goes to a question of Being, what IS, and here, there are no properties to distinguish. In existence there are many different things, states, all distinguished by what we can say about them. We don't believe these differences constitute differences OF Being, just differences IN Being.

Regarding the serious request:

To establish a truly foundational ontology, one has to look where things that assume a foundation have their implicit assumptions. All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes, so the question then is, what is language and logic? the OP says these belong to experience, and experience has a structure, and this structure is one of time. Past, present future. Thought and its "method" has a temporal structure, the anticipating of results when specified conditions are in place (hence, the success in repeatedly tying my shoes properly). Science is, technically speaking, all about what-will-happen if there is this, or that in place, or if one does this or that. Science doesn't have a problem; we ARE the scientific method in a very real way, in every anticipation of our lives there is a history of learned associations between what we do and what will happen. This is what cognition is.

Time is the foundation of Being, but it is not Einstein's time (an empirical concept based on observation) but structural time, the structure of Being itself in the experience that produces existence, OUR existence, that is, which is a temporal one. Time that structures our experience is not beyond experience and Einstein conceived of relativity in the temporally structured world of experience. Outside of this structure this time does not exist (unless it is in some other such experientially structured time, as with God, but this is an arbitrary idea).

Science's failure to be sufficient for philosophical thinking is not in the method, but in the content. I mean, even if I went full subjective into the deep recesses of my interiority and actually found God and the soul, this would be IN time, in an ability to anticipate the next moment, bring up memories, see that the usual is not the case here in order to have a contextual setting that I can recognize God as God. The rub lies with science's paradigms that are exclusively specialized and empirical and ignore the phenomenon of experience as it is. It takes parts of experience and reifies them into being-foundations. To me this is akin to taking knitting, a specialized "part" as well, and defining the existence in terms of the yarn and needle.

Philosophy is supposed to take the most basic and inclusive perspective in which one has pulled away from the "parts" and attempts to be about the whole, and the whole is experience structured in time, and then the matter turns to WHAT is there. Everything. Nothing excluded: love affairs, hatreds, our anxieties, our ethics, tragedies, and so on: all conceived structurally in time and as the WHAT of existence. All is, to use a strange term, equiprimordial, meaning no one is reducible to any other. Our affairs are not reducible to physical realities, but physical realities belong to a specialized language scientists use, or we all use in a casual way. Evolution is not in any way held suspect, to give an example. It is a very compelling theory. But other actualities are not reducible to this, do not have their explanatory basis in this.

It is science's hegemony that leads us to a position that denies the world's "parts" their rightful ontological status. And if any hegemony should rise, it should be based on what it IS, its "presence" as an irreducible actuality. Of course, this is the presence of affectivity (affect), the very essence of meaning itself.

Thank you.

I struggled a bit forming a (to me) coherent clear idea of your basic claim and supporting arguments. Rather than pick over the whole thing, it's perhaps simplest to focus on this part which is where you seem to end up –

and the whole is experience structured in time, and then the matter turns to WHAT is there. Everything. Nothing excluded: love affairs, hatreds, our anxieties, our ethics, tragedies, and so on: all conceived structurally in time and as the WHAT of existence. All is, to use a strange term, equiprimordial, meaning no one is reducible to any other. Our affairs are not reducible to physical realities, but physical realities belong to a specialized language scientists use

,

OK this I think I understand, and hopefully is the gist of your position. I'm taking this to be your claim re the actual ontological state of affairs.


But I would call this monist idealism. Only experience (structured in time) exists. The universe does not independently exist as a thing in itself, only as an experiential state. It's not just a claim that we experiencing beings can only KNOW about the universe in the form of experience, the claim is that only experience exists. Yes?

If so, how do you escape solipsism – or don't you?

If not, if your ontology includes what we call bodies and brains and trees and rocks, then further justification is required. If that is the case, can you clearly and concisely spell that justification out?

CHAPTER 1.77.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 1:46 PM



Faustus5 wrote

Can you articulate so much as one practical disadvantage or hurt that is caused by thinking this way?

Take a look at the end of my post to Sculptor1 above. Science is, like all disciplines, paradigmatically fixed, certainly open to research, but research rests with precedent. As we all know, this is a good thing, the scientific process, the hypothetical deductive method (note the deductive part indicating that prior to any research whatever, one is already equipped with interpretative assumptions. Only nothing comes from nothing) and it is certainly not method that is being called into question, if this is what you mean by "thinking this way". The disadvantage lies in, first, the plain fact that ontology simply goes deeper than empirical analysis and the point is to try to find what this bottom line really is in ontology, and second, science as a foundational ontology creates, as all such ideas, an interpretative bias toward what science says in all things. One may say, well, science has this matter of the nature of thought, affectivity, ethics, knowledge well in hand, but within such a claim is a general dismissal of things that are there, in the fabric of the world, metaethical questions, existential questions, religious questions, and the like. Science cannot discuss anything with prefixed by "meta" for such things are by definitions, beyond observation, yet they are also undeniable. Our "genuine" foundation in all things is not fixed, but open, and this openness IS the right ontology.

Can you point out so much as one "proper" starting place for a "true explanatory basis of the world" that has successfully satisfied basic human curiosity and basic human needs to the degree that science has?

If it were a matter of solving problems science has set for itself, then there is no doubt that science has no competition. Step out of these scientific themes and move into ethics, religion, existential crises, care, anxiety, mystery, (keep in mind that while Wittgenstein would not about foundational mysteries, metavalues, he certainly put these unspeakables in his thesis) structures of experience, and so on, and there is a new sense of revelation. Such, to use borrowed language, thematizing of the world is not within the purview of empirical science at all, for philosophy is an a priori affair.

So what? Why should anyone care?

Because the world is infinitely more interesting than anyone can imagine if all there is is what would call the implicit nihilism of scientific theory in forming a philosophical ontology.

How is this an advantage? Can you articulate so much a single improvement to anyone's life that follows from suddenly lacking this "confidence"?

I would turn the question back to you: If you disagree with the above, then you must think that science IS a proper source (not method, for method is not in question here) for the kind of foundational thinking I have been talking about. I would ask you to tell me how its paradigms address the expanse and depth of being human.

CHAPTER 1.78.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 2:15 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

1.77. by  Hereandnow

The disadvantage lies in, first, the plain fact that ontology simply goes deeper than empirical analysis and the point is to try to find what this bottom line really is in ontology, and second, science as a foundational ontology creates, as all such ideas, an interpretative bias toward what science says in all things.

You still haven't shown any sort of disadvantage to giving science a preferred status when the goal is understanding the nature of the universe. I see a lot of hand-waving, but nothing concrete.

1.77. by  Hereandnow

One may say, well, science has this matter of the nature of thought, affectivity, ethics, knowledge well in hand, but within such a claim is a general dismissal of things that are there, in the fabric of the world, metaethical questions, existential questions, religious questions, and the like.

Nobody literally dismisses those issues. Smart folks just realize that discussing them rationally sometimes requires tools that aren't in the scientific toolbox. This is not a big deal.

1.77. by  Hereandnow

If it were a matter of solving problems science has set for itself, then there is no doubt that science has no competition. Step out of these scientific themes and move into ethics, religion, existential crises, care, anxiety, mystery, (keep in mind that while Wittgenstein would not about foundational mysteries, metavalues, he certainly put these unspeakables in his thesis) structures of experience, and so on, and there is a new sense of revelation.

You could have been less lofty and vague and just written that "Step out of these scientific themes and you need different tools."

1.77. by  Hereandnow

Because the world is infinitely more interesting than anyone can imagine if all there is is what would call the implicit nihilism of scientific theory in forming a philosophical ontology.

A. So your entire point appears to be subjective and aesthetic. Many of the rest of us just have different aesthetic values.

B. Scientific theory is not nihilistic.

1.77. by  Hereandnow

I would turn the question back to you: If you disagree with the above, then you must think that science IS a proper source (not method, for method is not in question here) for the kind of foundational thinking I have been talking about.

I don't think anything is the proper source of the kind of foundational thinking you have been talking about, because the questions you are asking and answers you are seeking seem to be vaguely defined, by design, and therefore utterly beyond hope. Any kind of philosophical discussion that ventures into ill defined, vague territory without any hope of solving genuine, real problems for actual human beings means nothing to me, so science is foundation enough.

1.77. by  Hereandnow

I would ask you to tell me how its paradigms address the expanse and depth of being human.

They don't. They aren't supposed to.

CHAPTER 1.79.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 2:42 PM

pre-scientific view of the universe.

https://minmaxsunt.files.wordpress.com/..._small.gif



CHAPTER 1.80.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 2:45 PM

What science gives us

<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/VXoYEq8mSPM/hqdefault.jpg>

<https://www.space.com/images/i/000/009/...1306819474>

<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/hWiHg1yhJ4/maxresdefault.jpg>



Obviously the world is so much more interesting than science can portray

CHAPTER 1.81.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 2:58 PM

Sculptor1 wrote

Science only describes the world and in that description explanations emerge.

But what else is there?

There is no explanation for things in general what ever that means.

WHy are "THEY" to whom you refer? Without some sort of evidence you are just trying to caricature "some people", unspecified.

At least science extropolates from evidence. That is maybe something you could take from science?



There used to be such explanations. They were called religions, and everyone assumed there was a metaphysical foundation to all things, even if they couldn't spell the word; it was there, always already there: a meaning to meaning, if you will. We are cut loose now, many or most, but the religious dimension of our existence which made public religions necessary in the first place cannot be dismissed. This cutting loose is a very good thing, no doubt, but what are we cut loose into? If the science that gave rise to the collective disillusionment were to be carried to its explanatory conclusion, then nihilism ensues--- epistemological, ethical, and across the board.

My argument is that this only comes about in the error that comes out of turning science into a foundational ontology.

A lot of your comments would find their responses in the my post to Faustus5 just prior to this one. You mean WHO are they? It is an assumption based on reading what people say and observing the bias in their thoughts, a bias they don't even know they have. And I don't think it is wrong at all to say in this post modern age where religion and tradition is slipping away, there is nothing to fill that space. See Simon Critchley's Very Little..Almost Nothing for a more complete examination of this.

A bold statement, with nothing behind it.

As a rule, it is a good idea to read an entire post before commenting. Questions like this are often answered further on.

You seem to be struggling here.

It is unfamiliar to you, I know. This kind of thinking has a massive background, granted, BUT: If you follow the ideas as they are stated and give them their "due diligence" if you will, you will find they make sense. If you make an observation in the world, what IS an observation as such? I mean, a scientist does not ask such a question, yet there the question is. This is an ontological question, for it asks one to look closely at the structure of experience itself, an apriori investigation.

Religion, theology have taken a serious back seat to human understanding in our "age (or post age)of reason" and science is a bit like a deer in headlights staring into the abyss. All it can do (and should do) is turn its back to foundational matters, and the job is left to philosophy (the one true religion). If philosophy is conceived as still grounded in science, it spectacularly misses the point. The point is to recover the ground left open by religion an a way of sound logical thinking.

Unfortunately, soundness depends on premises being true, and this kind of truth gets unclear, problematic in existential matters. But so what? A positivist's clarity is simply a residuum of science's need for precision. This is one part of my complaint, and a big one: our world gets very interesting, even revelatory, beneath the skin of science's assumptions.

It's amusing to me that you think you know "the only true foundation", but have failed to demonstrate what that is, and why it might be better than verifiability and falsification.

No problem, keep in mind that the very brief ideas put forth here so far are in themselves compelling, but it does take some interpretative reach. Here is my painfully concise response to Gertie. There are flaws, one or two. E.g., the irreducibility of ANY notion is really another issue, and very hard to talk about.

Regarding the serious request:

To establish a truly foundational ontology, one has to look where things that assume a foundation have their implicit assumptions. All science is a construct of language and logic before it is ever even gets to constructing tests tubes and telescopes, so the question then is, what is language and logic? the OP says these belong to experience, and experience has a structure, and this structure is one of time. Past, present future. Thought and its "method" has a temporal structure, the anticipating of results when specified conditions are in place (hence, the success in repeatedly tying my shoes properly). Science is, technically speaking, all about what-will-happen if there is this, or that in place, or if one does this or that. Science doesn't have a problem; we ARE the scientific method in a very real way, in every anticipation of our lives there is a history of learned associations between what we do and what will happen. This is what cognition is.

Time is the foundation of Being, but it is not Einstein's time (an empirical concept based on observation) but structural time, the structure of Being itself in the experience that produces existence, OUR existence, that is, which is a temporal one. Time that structures our experience is not beyond experience and Einstein conceived of relativity in the temporally structured world of experience. Outside of this structure this time does not exist (unless it is in some other such experientially structured time, as with God, but this is an arbitrary idea).

Science's failure to be sufficient for philosophical thinking is not in the method, but in the content. I mean, even if I went full subjective into the deep recesses of my interiority and actually found God and the soul, this would be IN time, in an ability to anticipate the next moment, bring up memories, see that the usual is not the case here in order to have a contextual setting that I can recognize God as God. The rub lies with science's paradigms that are exclusively specialized and empirical and ignore the phenomenon of experience as it is. It takes parts of experience and reifies them into being-foundations. To me this is akin to taking knitting, a specialized "part" as well, and defining the existence in terms of the yarn and needle.

Philosophy is supposed to take the most basic and inclusive perspective in which one has pulled away from the "parts" and attempts to be about the whole, and the whole is experience structured in time, and then the matter turns to WHAT is there. Everything. Nothing excluded: love affairs, hatreds, our anxieties, our ethics, tragedies, and so on: all conceived structurally in time and as the WHAT of existence. All is, to use a strange term, equiprimordial, meaning no one is reducible to any other. Our affairs are not reducible to physical realities, but physical realities belong to a specialized language scientists use, or we all use in a casual way. Evolution is not in any way held suspect, to give an example. It is a very compelling theory. But other actualities are not reducible to this, do not have their explanatory basis in this.

It is science's hegemony that leads us to a position that denies the world's "parts" their rightful ontological status. And if any hegemony should rise, it should be based on what it IS, its "presence" as an

irreducible actuality. Of course, this is the presence of affectivity (affect), the very essence of meaning itself.

CHAPTER 1.82.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Monday, August 24, 2020 at 4:38 PM



Faustus5 wrote

Nobody literally dismisses those issues. Smart folks just realize that discussing them rationally sometimes requires tools that aren't in the scientific toolbox. This is not a a big deal.

Then I am glad i ran into a smart folk like you. Tell me, how do smart folks deal with such things? Not a tough question for you since it is, after all, not a big deal.

You could have been less lofty and vague and just written that "Step out of these scientific themes and you need different tools."

I had to look back at what I wrote. THAT is lofty and vague??? Look, it's not. I write the way I write.

A. So your entire point appears to be subjective and aesthetic. Many of the rest of us just have different aesthetic values.

B. Scientific theory is not nihilistic.

Again, I am glad you brought this forward. How is scientific theory not nihilistic? That is, what is there in the empirical examination of the world that generates a metaethics? For nihilism IS a metaphysical thesis. It goes to the meaning of meaning, the value of value. At the more mundane level of thinking, there is meaning and knowledge and free wielding engagement. but the matters being raised here have to with taking such affairs AS ontologically foundational.

No, it's not about irreconcilable differences, as when someone likes one thing while another does not, at all. It is a claim that goes to what it is to be culturally led astray. This philosophy forum *reeks* of positivism. It is an error that needs correcting.

I don't think anything is the proper source of the kind of foundational thinking you have been talking about, because the questions you are asking and answers you are seeking seem to be vaguely defined, by design, and therefore utterly beyond hope. Any kind of philosophical discussion that ventures into ill defined, vague territory without any hope of solving genuine, real problems for actual human beings means nothing to me, so science is foundation enough.

No, no, no. There is a LOT out there. You are just dismissive because your education is philosophically, ontologically rudderless, and this is because you don't read beyond science into science's and experience's underpinnings. Read Kant, Kierkegaard, Hegel (of whom I know less than others), Husserl, Fink, Levinas, Blanchot, Henry, Nancy (the French are extraordinary) Heidegger, Husserl, even Derrida, and others. THIS is where philosophy gets interesting.

CHAPTER 1.83.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, August 24, 2020 at 4:58 PM

1.72. by 🌿 Hereandnow

This kind of thinking doesn't even provide the proper starting place for a true explanatory basis of the world. One has to ignore what science says, that is, suspend this (epoche) and look to what science presupposes in order to get to a foundation.

plain fact that ontology simply goes deeper than empirical analysis and the point is to try to find what this bottom line really is in ontology

But ontology has no bottom line, there is no foundation. We just wish there was one. All human explanation is deep down inherently circular and descriptive.

We can merely come up with more and more accurate circular descriptions of the known existence. And the scientific process, though pretty one-sided and instrumentalist, has helped tremendously to see more clearly.

CHAPTER 1.84.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, August 24, 2020 at 5:35 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



1.82. by 🌿 Hereandnow

Then I am glad i ran into a smart folk like you. Tell me, how do smart folks deal with such things? Not a tough question for you since it is, after all, not a big deal.

You already know the answer, don't play coy. On this we both agree--science has, at best, a very limited contribution to make when the issues being discussed involve ethical, political, or aesthetic values.

Just about everyone knows this, so you are wasting time and space pretending there is a huge problem here.

1.82. by 🌿 Hereandnow

Again, I am glad you brought this forward. How is scientific theory not nihilistic?

Nihilism is a specific conclusion that can only be drawn within non-scientific kinds of discourse. I don't know what kinds of points you think you are scoring by playing these kinds of games.

1.82. by  Hereandnow

That is, what is there in the empirical examination of the world that generates a metaethics?

Nothing. Time to move on.

1.82. by  Hereandnow

This philosophy forum reeks of positivism. It is an error that needs correcting.

If you were actually talking about positivism, that would be something, but you aren't.

1.82. by  Hereandnow

You are just dismissive because your education is philosophically, ontologically rudderless. . .

No, I just have very different rudders than you.


1.82. by  Hereandnow

THIS is where philosophy gets interesting.

I have no interest at all in any of those folks. None whatsoever.

CHAPTER 1.85.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 24, 2020 at 5:49 PM



Gertie wrote

I struggled a bit forming a (to me) coherent clear idea of your basic claim and supporting arguments. Rather than pick over the whole thing, it's perhaps simplest to focus on this part which is where you seem to end up -

All I can say beyond this is, why not do what I did several years back? Get a nice readable copy of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Macquarrie's translation the one I know), set aside significant time, and just decide you are going to read this and understand what he is saying. The internet is a wealth of helpful commentary. If you like, I can send you many pdf papers, books. Once you are IN IT, and you start to understand Heidegger's phenomenology, you will see what these ideas are really about. You will have to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, too, though. Then Husserl, then so many.

I am by no means a scholar on this. I read, I write with pretty good understanding, and this is all I want. See Lev Shestov's *All Things Are Possible*: philosophy should be a real engagement that begins with a wonder and bewilderment and anxiety about what it means to be here at all, thrown into a world. See Kierkegaard's poor sap in *Repetition*. One of my favorites:

I stick my finger into the world—it has no smell. Where am I? What does it mean to say: the world? What is the meaning of that word? Who tricked me into this

whole thing and leaves me standing here? Who am I? How did I get into the world? Why was I not asked about it, why was I not informed of the rules and regulations but just thrust into the ranks as if I had been bought from a peddling shanghaier²¹ of human beings? How did I get involved in this big enterprise called actuality? Why should I be involved? Isn't it a matter of choice? And if I am compelled to be involved, where is the manager—I have something to say about this.

It is not a world of science we are thrown into, but a world of nightmares, loves, powerful with meaning. Philosophy is the pursuit of meaning, not propositional knowledge.

OK this I think I understand, and hopefully is the gist of your position. I'm taking this to be your claim re the actual ontological state of affairs.

But I would call this monist idealism. Only experience (structured in time) exists. The universe does not independently exist as a thing in itself, only as an experiential state. It's not just a claim that we experiencing beings can only KNOW about the universe in the form of experience, the claim is that only experience exists. Yes?

If so, how do you escape solipsism - or don't you?

If not, if your ontology includes what we call bodies an brains and trees and rocks, then further justification is required. If that is the case, can you clearly and concisely spell that justification out?

It is very clear that experience is put together with an in and an out. There is that over there, and I am here. Heidegger, I remember, says, in effect: what is space? It is under the couch, over the mountain, round the house, just beyond that hill, next the car, and so on. Our language is, at the level of ontology, interpretative, meaning is what language does, and beyond this, there is only an openness, the ability of language to create further disclosure possibilities. To speak of things that are not qualified in any way by what words, history, culture can say is impossible. This is why we have terms like ineffability or transcendence. when you look at an object, it is always, already laden with interpretation; that's what it means to be an object. But there is this openness, this frontier where language seeks, makes metaphors and poeticizes the world. Heidegger thought that through history, metaphysics has undone this primordial intimacy with our being here. He is all about this alienation from something the Greeks perhaps in part had. Others after Heidegger, take up this extraordinary ability we have to encounter the world ontologically, a stepping OUT of the normal range of meaning making, and beholding the world in wonder and anxiety.

I don't have all of this perfectly right, but so what? A lot of it is, and is you take up reading existentialism, we can talk about it. I am reading Being and Time for the second time right now.

As to solipsism, the world is hermeneutically conceived. All terms are to be understood as part of a work in progress of human dasein. There are no absolutes, but in our system of thought and judgment and meaning, there is that which is not me, there are others, other people, other things; we are surrounded by others. What is otherness? the meaning lies the language about others, which

is interpretative in nature. I say you, over there, where is the other one you were with? We have massive language orientation for talking about others, but the foundational ontology is interpretative, not subjective. All of this otherness around us is there as otherness, and this is contained in the interpretative possibilities.

The old fashioned way to think about the world, the dualisms, the competing ontologies, all yield to a phenomenological, hermeneutical, ontology. In themselves, things all around us are unspeakable. BUT, and this is the BIG and fascinating thing about how works, and it is not Heidegger, but Levinas and other post Heideggerians: In this interpretative field before us, what is intimated non linguistically (though we do understand that linguistics is, as all terms, an interpretative affair) is, to use Kierkegaard's term, actuality, and while we cannot say what this really is (which would be a like looking into the rational mind of God) we experience it qualitatively, and these qualities are affective in nature, the caring, loving, valuing and so on. this is a dimension of Being that looks beyond. to see how this goes, see Levinas' *totality and Infinity*. A tough read by any standard, but totally worth it.

CHAPTER 1.86.

~

Angel Trismegistus on 🕒 Monday, August 24, 2020 at 9:36 PM



1.3. by *Hereandnow*

...

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

This has been an outstanding thread in every respect: topic, theme, thesis, discussion. Kudos to all involved.

Philosophical laurels to *Hereandnow* not only for his formidable defense of philosophy but also for his maintenance of the high level of discussion.

I believe the following paper is on point.

I post it for the enjoyment of my fellow members.

Natural philosophy redux

The great split between science and philosophy must be repaired. Only then can we answer the urgent, fundamental problems

There are decisive grounds for holding that we need to bring about a revolution in philosophy, a revolution in science, and then put the two together again to create a modern version of natural philosophy.

Once upon a time, it was not just that philosophy was a part of science; rather, science was a branch of philosophy. We need to remember that modern science began as natural philosophy – a development of philosophy, an admixture of philosophy and science. Today, we think of Galileo, Johannes Kepler, William Harvey, Robert Boyle, Christiaan Huygens, Robert Hooke, Edmond Halley and, of course, Isaac Newton as trailblazing scientists, while we think of Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibniz as philosophers. That division is, however, something we impose on the past. It is profoundly anachronistic.

At the time, they would all have thought of themselves as natural philosophers.

Read more here:

<https://aeon.co/essays/bring-back-scienc...philosophy>

CHAPTER 1.87.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 8:15 AM

Consul wrote:Ornithology is useful to birds because ornithological knowledge is useful to bird conservation.

Fair point. By the way, I don't personally agree with Feynman on that.

CHAPTER 1.88.

~

Gertie on  Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 1:32 PM

Gertie wrote

I struggled a bit forming a (to me) coherent clear idea of your basic claim and supporting arguments. Rather than pick over the whole thing, it's perhaps simplest to focus on this part which is where you seem to end up -

*All I can say beyond this is, why not do what I did several years back? Get a nice readable copy of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Macquarrie's translation the one I know), set a side significant time, and just decide you are going to read this and understand what he is saying. The internet is a wealth of helpful commentary. If you like, I can send you many pdf papers, books. Once you are IN IT, and you start to understand Heidegger's phenomenology, you will see what these ideas are really about. You will have to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, too, though. Then Husserl, then so many.*

*I am by no means a scholar on this. I read, I write with pretty good understanding, and this is all I want. See Lev Shestov's *All Things Are Possible*: philosophy should be a real engagement that begins with a wonder and bewilderment and anxiety about what it means to be here at all, thrown into a world. See Kierkegaard's poor sap in *Repetition*. One of my favorites:*

I stick my finger into the world—it has no smell. Where am I? What does it mean to say: the world? What is the meaning of that word? Who tricked me into this whole thing and leaves me standing here? Who am I? How did I get into the world? Why was I not asked about it, why was I not informed of the rules and regulations but just thrust into the ranks as if I had been bought from a peddling shanghaier²¹ of human beings? How did I get involved in this big enterprise called actuality? Why should I be involved? Isn't it a matter of choice? And if I am compelled to be involved, where is the manager—I have something to say about this.

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I like the notion of stripping away assumptions and trying to approach the nature of experience afresh, and I agree that this is all that is directly known, the experience itself. The nature of what the experience is 'about', the 'external other', can not be known in that first person way.

So science has to rely on different criteria to create working models of what our experience is about, what the contents of experience refer to, where meaning and mattering fit in. And the place where it gets stuck - how phenomenal experience it might arise. Which leaves open the possibility that experience is fundamental. (Though physicalists - not physics which has no place for experience in its model - have a preference for material stuff as fundamental and experience as reducible, being somehow an emergent or other property of material stuff).

I don't think this is, or need be, difficult to understand, or particularly controversial. Even the scientific findings themselves suggest our methods of attributing qualities (like material stuff, gravity or whatever) come from a way of experiencing those things which is rooted in evolutionary utility from a limited first person pov, not an all-knowing god's eye point of view.

But a phenomenological methodology only reliant on internal introspection about the nature of experience has problems too. It is open to solipsism (any talk of 'we experience...' is an unfounded

assumption), the problem of blurring knowledge with the actual state of affairs, and the blindingly obvious problem of bias. So a methodology which assumes experience is a perfect god's eye access to all that is actual/real/exists is also unwarranted.

So while each methodology, internal reflection *and* external modelling based on the contents of our perceptions, reasoning, etc, can potentially each 'contain' the other, neither has clear justification to do so or claim primacy. Which is a bit whacky. But to me, that's not necessarily beyond explanation. But it certainly requires an ontological explanation. That's the ontological dilemma I think we're in.

CHAPTER 1.89.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 2:20 PM



1.74. by Sculptor1

Science only describes the world and in that description explanations emerge.

Science describes the physical world, yes.

1.74. by Sculptor1

But what else is there?

To us, there is a mental world, which is perhaps most clearly seen as our *social* world. The world of news, politics, fashion, drama, entertainment and the internet; the world in which we all seem to live our lives. The physical world is almost a mute backdrop to the world of Justin Bieber, #BlackLivesMatter and JK Rowling. This may not be accurate from many perspectives, but it is the reality of life for most of us (those who are not too poor to be part of it). That's 'what else there is'.

CHAPTER 1.90.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 2:46 PM



As regards the general hegemony of science, here are links to a couple of articles that illustrate, in the *particular* case of CoViD-19, how there is a lot more to it than just science. A claim to be 'following the science' is absurd. Medical science has much to contribute, agreed, but so has economics, politics, media-pressure, and the *immense* difficulty of putting plans into practice in the *real* world. Here are the links.

[scientists-criticise-uk-government-over-following-the-science](#)

[following-the-science-in-the-covid-19-pandemic](#)

This is just one example of science not being the whole answer to a particular problem. There are many more. Because of the spectacular success of science, I assume, science is regularly applied in situations where it is neither relevant or helpful. This detracts unfairly from science, and impacts unfairly on all of us. The hegemony of science is perhaps most obvious in philosophy forums, where it is touted by objectivists/sciencists as the only acceptable tool for the investigation of life, the universe and everything. There is nothing at all wrong with science, but it is not the one and only universal means of learning. I believe that's what this thread is trying to illustrate. But I've been wrong before.... 😊

CHAPTER 1.91.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 3:03 PM



1.89. by Pattern-chaser

1.74. by Sculptor1

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That's your internal world which is not examinable except by your persistence to keep on about it. Science if it has hegemony or not does not stop you nor does it interfere with you doing that. So nothing else to examine the actual world.

CHAPTER 1.92.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 3:05 PM



We might do better discussion the absurd hegemony of Social media and fake news that plagues the world

CHAPTER 1.93.

~

1.86. by *Angel Trismegistus*

*I believe the following paper is on point.
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The great split between science and philosophy must be repaired. Only then can we answer the urgent, fundamental problems

There are decisive grounds for holding that we need to bring about a revolution in philosophy, a revolution in science, and then put the two together again to create a modern version of natural philosophy.

Once upon a time, it was not just that philosophy was a part of science; rather, science was a branch of philosophy. We need to remember that modern science began as natural philosophy – a development of philosophy, an admixture of philosophy and science. Today, we think of Galileo, Johannes Kepler, William Harvey, Robert Boyle, Christiaan Huygens, Robert Hooke, Edmond Halley and, of course, Isaac Newton as trailblazing scientists, while we think of Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibniz as philosophers. That division is, however, something we impose on the past. It is profoundly anachronistic.

At the time, they would all have thought of themselves as natural philosophers.

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[https://aeon.co/essays/bring-back-scienc ... philosophy](https://aeon.co/essays/bring-back-scienc...philosophy)

Maybe this is just my view, but how can anyone, who hasn't already re-unified 'science' and 'philosophy', be taken seriously to begin with?

CHAPTER 1.94.

~



1.93. by Atla

1.86. by Angel Trismegistus

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Maybe this is just my view, but how can anyone, who hasn't already re-unified 'science' and 'philosophy', be taken seriously to begin with?

Isn't that precisely what Maxwell does in his paper? He argues for unity of science and philosophy by way of aim-oriented empiricism and aim-oriented rationality in science on the one hand, and on the other Critical Fundamentalism in philosophy. Granted, the unity is purely discursive, i.e., an argument, but what else could it be? His paper is a call for revolution in both spheres, a revolution that would in effect bring about a return to Natural Philosophy.

CHAPTER 1.95.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 4:09 PM



Sculptor1 wrote

We might do better discussion the absurd hegemony of Social media and fake news that plagues the world

If you could just give more analysis to this kind of talk, who knows, I might even agree with you.

CHAPTER 1.96.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 5:03 PM



Gertie wrote

But a phenomenological methodology only reliant on internal introspection about the nature of experience has problems too. It is open to solipsism (any talk of 'we experience...' is an unfounded assumption), the problem of blurring knowledge with the actual state of affairs, and the blindingly obvious problem of bias. So a methodology which assumes experience is a perfect god's eye access to all that is actual/real/exists is also unwarranted.

So while each methodology, internal reflection and external modelling based on the contents of our perceptions, reasoning, etc, can potentially each 'contain' the other, neither has clear justification to do so or claim primacy. Which is a bit whacky. But to me, that's not necessarily beyond explanation. But it certainly requires an ontological explanation. That's the ontological dilemma I think we're in.

Not sure what you mean about blurring knowledge with **actual** states of affairs. You mean, without the assumption of actual states of affairs? But such a thing is just what is in question.

The blinding problem of bias seems to be this: If one were to take the notion of interpretation as one that implicitly endorses all competitors, and thereby endorses none, leaving things to the ugly ambitions of the worst and most powerful of us. Like the Nazis. Genghis Khan was told by god to go out and conquer just as Gandhi was a devout Hindu and King a Christian. It seems to leave matters "open" in a perverse way. This is, of course, the charge of moral (or otherwise?) relativism.

If you say that the "we experience" is unfounded, you will have to go through the matter properly. See Quine's theory of the indeterminacy of translation for a respectable response that has nothing to do with Continental philosophy. Before we ever get to the abuses and unwelcome consequences of such an idea as interpretation and its relativism, we have to get through the genuine, descriptive account itself. I mean, if something is true, if it is the best descriptive account, then we are rather stuck with it and there is no looking back.

Phenomenology is the most "authentic" view. It is the most sustainable because does not fall apart in the powerful objections of question begging that apply to all other traditional ontologies. Ask what physicalism is regarding its core concept, "the physical," and you find instantly that all that you would say leads you back to the saying itself, the matrix of ideas that from which the term issues FIRST, before it gets discussed at all. Taken to its logical conclusion, one finds oneself in Derrida's world: no structure, no foundation, no privilege given to anything; even the idea of interpretation itself, which is to be the new foundation, is interpretative in nature. You are in the postmodern world! Even on the analytic side, there is no confirmation possible. This is why analytic philosophers follow Wittgenstein. One must move through the institutions (Quine, I believe, was a devout Catholic!) we have for meaning and grounding as they are the only wheels that roll, and there is no confirmation outside of these; there is only transcendence and ineffability "out there". Hence, they follow science, a wheel that rolls very well!

It sounds like you are asking, why not go analytic? which is a good question, but the answers are troubling. Philosophy wants truth, and truth is grounded in affairs that are imposed upon us. we may have invented government, but we did not invent the need for government. The need is a "given". Cancer is a given, but the question is begged (the one standard that says something is amiss is the presence of a begged question): what is wrong with cancer, or any other disease? I mean in the actual lived event, what is a proper analysis of the "wrongness" of cancer? IN the difficulty breathing or the poisoned blood, not in themselves bad, there is something else that is

beyond the observable phenomenon! It is the "badness" of the experience of these. Moore calls this kind of badness a "non natural property". I have argued this elsewhere: Put a match to your finger and observe. There is a VERY mysterious presence in this event that we do not have vocabulary for, save the usual talk aof good and bad and this gets confused with the *contingent* good and bad. This is a matter I leave to you if you want further discussion. It is, in my thoughts, THE philosophical question. Phenomenology allows this question, that of ethics and reality, to rise to conscious thought without the drag of

Now, the point I want to make about this is, *IF science (in keeping with the OP) is the guiding star for analysis of a finger on fire, then the ethical "badness" is all but dismissed, for science is thematically not equipped to talk about such things.* This is religion's world, not science's. Religion has always been our meta-moral compass (the reason why Quine was a Christian is because religion continues to be THE rolling wheel of metaethics, that is, the metaphysics of ethics), and the consequence of this is with the fall of religion's ethical dominance(thank god for that!) there is a space, an expansive abyss, really, left OPEN; that of metaethics, metavalue. Analytic philosophers, like John Mackie, simply say, metaethics is just nonsense, too "queer" to be intelligible, and this is what happens when philosophy leans so strongly toward the strict standards of clarity and evidence we find in science. But our post religion "religious situation" is simply not like this in observed affairs, for it is this unobservable. Metaethics is like causality: intuitively insisting, but NOT discursively arrived at.

Anyway, like I said, it is a very big issue. But ethics (or, the philosophical ontology of ethics) is clearly what human affairs is about, *and empirical science cannot begin to discuss it. It is apriori, philosophy's true calling.*

As to "god's eye access" I believe that ethics is IN the fabric of things. We do not invent that which is at the core of ethics, which is value (e.g., that burning sensation). It is there, like the color yellow is there. Now, calling yellow a color is an interpretative event, and if you remove the interpretation, that is, the discussion, theory, context, and so forth, all that is left is unintelligible presence. But that flame on the our finger TELLS us something about presence qua presence: we call this ethical realist badness. It is about as close to a burning bush or a tablet from a Mount Sinai as you can get.

You second paragraph is unclear to me. Perhaps you could give a bit more?

CHAPTER 1.97.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 7:19 PM



Angel Trismegistus wrote:

[https://aeon.co/essays/bring-back-scienc ... philosophy](https://aeon.co/essays/bring-back-scienc...philosophy)

I am reading through this article and I'll make comments as I go:

here is a quote:

One attempted solution was Continental philosophy, conducted mainly in Europe: it could ignore science, ignore reason, and plunge into a celebration of bombast and incoherence.

Of course, is a rather nonspecific way of dismissal. Heidegger was neither bombastic nor incoherent. Nor was Kierkegaard, nor Jaspers, nor....; nor did they ignore reason. Kant was a rationalist!

For example, if the accepted theory is Newton's law of gravitation, one rival, up till now just as empirically successful as Newton's theory, might assert: everything occurs as Newton's theory predicts until 2050, when gravitation abruptly becomes a repulsive force.

I have heard this before. It was in Hillary Putnam's *Many Faces of Realism*. Can't remember why it was plausible, though. Obviously, Science's paradigm's are anticipatory (and even inherently so), and the repulsive force theory has no anticipatory grounding. It is a possibility at best. I also remember reading about the lottery paradox: favor one theory has over its competitors lies with familiarity with a very limited base, only an infinitesimal representative sampling of the world. This reduces favor to a factor of an infinitely diminishing validity. True...But it is, as they say, the only wheel that rolls. The decision to trust science is pragmatic.

science has already established that the cosmos is physically comprehensible aim-oriented empiricism

But this limits science to only empirical claims. Even if, as Wittgenstein put it, you had access to the great book of all facts, you would not find one value fact in the lot of it. Science cannot study this, the most important dimension of being human. Also, empirical claims are all delivered to us via experience. Science cannot examine experience for experience is presupposed in the examination. It is the ethical (valuative) and foundational problems that cannot be addressed by science, as well as the interpretative bias a value-free conception can only give that makes science singularly ineffectual for philosophy.

Read through the rest. It is a thoroughly biased thesis: what to do with science to address its problems with unity and how to give lip service to metaphysics. It just assumes things about Husserl, Heidegger and the rest as being out of consideration. Perhaps this works for science to have a better grasp on what IT does, but for philosophy, it, this theory, has no place.

Level 8, missing, is where phenomenology comes in and philosophy begins. Any philosophical work done prior to the missing level 8 is speculative science.

CHAPTER 1.98.

~



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Yes, I found his dismissal of Continental philosophy cringe-worthy, but liked the overall theme of a renaissance of Natural Philosophy congenial.

Not at all surprised you caught him out.

CHAPTER 1.99.

~

HowardWow1997 on 🕒 Friday, August 28, 2020 at 11:39 AM



It seems to me that you strongly generalize the word philosophy. After all, science, as for me, is also a part of philosophy. We can look at this or that case through the prism of science. And in turn, there are many trends in philosophy that people with a subjective position may not like.

CHAPTER 1.100.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, August 28, 2020 at 1:28 PM

HAN

Not sure what you mean about blurring knowledge with actual states of affairs. You mean, without the assumption of actual states of affairs? But such a thing is just what is in question.

If you say that the "we experience" is unfounded, you will have to go through the matter properly.

OK, my ontology is something like this -

I claim my own experience exists. I claim to know this actual state of affairs for certain.

There is also an actual state of affairs re whether an 'external world' exists. It does or doesn't. (This isn't a language issue.)

I claim this is unknowable. It requires a leap of faith.

I claim that if I take this leap of faith, and assume my experience refers to a real world 'out there', I can know things about that world - in a flawed and limited way.

One of the things I can then know about the world is that I share it with other people, much like me. And we can then compare notes and create a working model of the world we share - this is the basis for the scientific model of the world. Which is inevitably flawed and incomplete, because within that shared world of shared notes, the ability of humans to know things seems to be flawed and incomplete (we have an evolved-for-utility first person pov, not a perfect god's eye pov)

So my claim is that the only thing I know for certain is my experience.

And terms like "we experience..." only relate to the assumed external world the contents of my experience refer to, where other people exist. There is a distinct epistemological jump from certain experience, to an assumed external world. And once I make that jump, I can start building a working model of that world with other people. Recognising the model isn't perfect and doesn't answer all questions. Including the nature of the relationship between experience and material stuff.

I can't get a handle on your ontological claims, it looks blurry over these types of questions - Do you claim experience exists for certain? Do you claim the external world that experience refers to exists? If so, what aspects of that world do you include in your ontology as reliably known? If you include other people's reported experience, do you include other people's (and your) bodies too? Trees and rocks and computers? Do you claim bodies, trees and rocks are made of the same stuff as experience? Or something different?

And where do you draw your lines of what's knowable in terms of the external world? And what criteria do you use?

>/ like "we experience...". But you don't bridge the gap between me examining my own experience, to arrive at the ontological conclusion that other people (part of an external world) exist.

If other people are only recognised as existing as part of my experience/"interpretative field", then their reported experience isn't something I can rely on in a way to slide from "my interpretive field" to broader "we" claims about the 'external world'. You either say you don't know, OR place them ontologically as part of the experience, OR as independantly existing fellow experiencers. If it's the latter, then you've made an assumption that an external world exists, independant of your experience, which you can know something about.

If you've covered all this specifically I've missed it. I'd really like to get your ontological position clear in my mind. Like I say, this much should be simple to lay out clearly.

What do you claim exists?

What do you think is knowable/unknowable? Where do you draw your lines?

And briefly the reasons why.

CHAPTER 1.101.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, August 28, 2020 at 1:37 PM

There is a VERY mysterious presence in this event that we do not have vocabulary for, save the usual talk aof good and bad and this gets confused with the contingent good and bad. This is a matter I leave to you if you want further discussion. It is, in my thoughts, THE philosophical question. Phenomenology allows this question, that of ethics and reality, to rise to conscious thought without the drag of

I think this is vital too, and imo morality is in need of a new philosophical paradigm in light of scientific discoveries which frame it in terms of evolutionary utility. I have my own thoughts and would be happy to discuss it further, if I can get the basics of your ontological position locked down.

CHAPTER 1.102.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, August 28, 2020 at 7:21 PM

HowardWow1997

It seems to me that you strongly generalize the word philosophy. After all, science, as for me, is also a part of philosophy. We can look at this or that case through the prism of science. And in turn, there are many trends in philosophy that people with a subjective position may not like.

I wonder if you could expand on that a bit: how is science part of philosophy? In what way do you mean the term 'science'?

CHAPTER 1.103.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Friday, August 28, 2020 at 7:21 PM



1.99. by HowardWow1997

It seems to me that you strongly generalize the word philosophy.

After all, science, as for me, is also a part of philosophy. We can look at this or that case through the prism of science. And in turn, there are many trends in philosophy that people with a subjective position may not like.

Hi HowardWow1997, and welcome to our dance!

I agree that science is part of philosophy, but there are those who will not. And I can certainly sympathise with the view that science long ago grew up and left home (philosophy), since when it has established itself as an allied but different discipline. Still, this topic concerns the mis-application of science. Although we can choose to look at any case "through the prism of science", I think it's fair to observe that in some cases, we will find that science is an inappropriate tool for the job, yes? 🤔

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 0 4 .

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, August 29, 2020 at 3:54 PM



Gertie wrote

I claim my own experience exists. I claim to know this actual state of affairs for certain.

There is also an actual state of affairs re whether an 'external world' exists. It does or doesn't. (This isn't a language issue.)

I claim this is unknowable. It requires a leap of faith.

I claim that if I take this leap of faith, and assume my experience refers to a real world 'out there', I can know things about that world - in a flawed and limited way.

First I would not call it a leap of faith (not some Kierkegaardian leap out of principled ethical thinking) but more an entirely justified and well grounded belief. I believe this to be true as does everyone else. But this has not yet begun to be ontological; merely ontic, to use Heidegger's language. Ontology, for him, is another order of thinking entirely. It doesn't look at how reliable empirical science is at all. It looks at the very form of experience itself that is presupposed by empirical science. Make an observation about the sun's composition or axonal networks of the brain, and you assume a foundation of what it means to BE. This needs to be analyzed. Empirical science simply ignores this, and this makes it philosophically/ontologically preanalytic. This is philosophy's job, to go deeper to unrecognized (or willfully ignored) underpinnings of things. It is not, for example, an analysis of Trump's rise to power and the tension and friction it causes, but an examination of what the legitimacy of government is at all. The point is to stand back from the empirical events that fill out lives, and analyze at the most fundamental level to get to something that is not reducible to something else (which is not possible; or is it?). So: you say, "I can know things about that world," and I ask, "what do you mean by knowing, that world, flawed and limited?? Up until these questions are posited, I am in full agreement with you.

How can anything NOT be a language issue when you use language, thought and logic to think what a thing is? All meaningful terms have their meaning in their analysis. What is a banker? If no one has anything to say, then I assume the term without meaning. Actuality? Existence? State of affairs? These are all terms with serious questions; I mean, how can one inquire about ontology, and then just assume what the term existence is? Patently question begging.

One of the things I can then know about the world is that I share it with other people, much like me. And we can then compare notes and create a working model of the world we share – this is the basis for the scientific model of the world. Which is inevitably flawed and incomplete, because within that shared world of shared notes, the ability of humans to know things seems to be flawed and incomplete (we have an evolved-for-utility first person pov, not a perfect god's eye pov)

Just as with the above, there are other people, other things, but then there is the *ontology* of other people and other things. Obviously there are other people. But what is this otherness? Other than what? Myself? What is a self, and what is it such that others can be other than me? to ignore such questions, I say to almost everyone in this forum, is just perverse. This is not how responsible thinking goes. We do not simply ignore quantum physics because it is at present counterintuitive, disruptive. Evidence requires a paradigm shift, to use Kuhn's words (a Kantian, btw).

So my claim is that the only thing I know for certain is my experience.

And terms like "we experience..." only relate to the assumed external world the contents of my experience refer to, where other people exist. There is a distinct epistemological jump from certain experience, to an assumed external world. And once I make that jump, I can start building a working model of that world with other people. Recognising the model isn't perfect and doesn't answer all questions. Including the nature of the relationship between experience and material stuff.

The same as above. I am entirely in your corner. That is, until questions of ontology step in. Then, I do not leave your corner at all. I do stop playing this game and move on to another, but when I come back to this game, I am still in your corner.

Ontological questions: what IS material stuff? I mean, define it. Look at what you said: "we have an evolved-for-utility first person pov, not a perfect god's eye povat." Now you are closing in on Heidegger, though talk about evolution lies elsewhere. Utility? Are you saying our language has its essence in utility, and that to know something is to know how it works, and only in the contexts of what works and does not, and, perhaps the knowledge we assume to have of the meaning of terms like existence and actuality is really an underlying "sense" of the utility of language and pragmatics that is there, waiting when you approach a hammer, a telescope, a social situation; perhaps what reality IS, is this body of successful anticipations that has emerged out of a lifetime problems solved, and ontologies of substance, material, physicality, God's creation, are all just the way language has been set up in various cultural and scientific contexts such that these contexts have dictated the value and meaning of these terms. So when you insist the world is substance, you are really working within a context of language use established by an historical/pragmatic settings, that are handed to you in THIS setting. When you come into the world, whether it is ancient Rome or a 19th Zulu tribe, the terms of what IS are handed to you and you simply absorb them. This absorption is the foundation for your life, and every thought you have will be always already an issue of this.

In thinking like this, the measure of right, wrong, good, bad, is what works. But this by no means reduces all meaning to this pragmatic standard. Obviously, the world is also GIVEN. We invented ice cream, but we did not invent pleasure, nor anxiety, hate, love, pain, and so on. The separation of parts here, where the given ends and the utility begins in a knowledge encounter in the world is a very interesting issue in philosophy. See Caputo's Radical Hermeneutics (but read Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger first. I'm still working on Derrida. A tough go, but interesting. I know all this reading is off putting).

I can't get a handle on your ontological claims, it looks blurry over these types of questions - Do you claim experience exists for certain? Do you claim the external world that experience refers to exists? If so, what aspects of that world do you include in your ontology as reliably known? If you include other people's reported experience, do you include other people's (and your) bodies too? Trees and rocks and computers? Do you claim bodies, trees and rocks are made of the same stuff as experience? Or something different?

And where do you draw your lines of what's knowable in terms of the external world? And what criteria do you use?

It's an odd affair. For me, it is realizing the terms like "external" and the rest are do not put forth meaning that is about what is independent of the pragmatic structures of experience. As Rorty put it, there is no truth out there; truth is propositional, and propositions are not out there. Truth is made, not discovered, he writes. We make truth out of our experiential conditions, and to talk about what there would be independent of experience is like talking about what our sun would be without nuclear fusion: no fusion, no sun; no experience, no external, internal, or anything else. These terms' meanings are OF experience.

Does this mean there is nothing independent of experience? Wittgenstein (from the Tractatus), in his own words, would say such talk is nonsense. It is a performative contradiction to SAY there are things beyond the saying, for to posit such a thing requires the saying. Take away the saying, and there is nothing to, well, say. One has to respect this and have ability to entertain the idea that our experience only delivers understanding through logic and language.

But for me the game changer is ethics and value.

If other people are only recognised as existing as part of my experience/"interpretative field", then their reported experience isn't something I can rely on in a way to slide from "my interpretive field" to broader "we" claims about the 'external world'. You either say you don't know, OR place them ontologically as part of the experience, OR as independantly existing fellow experiencers. If it's the latter, then you've made an assumption that an external world exists, independant of your experience, which you can know something about.

Or that externality appears before us and we have to analyze this phenomenologically. Here I am with my "I" and "mine" stamped on all that is my experience. A stone sits there before me: my knowledge of the stone is mine and the interpretative meanings that go out to it are what I give it. I say it is an igneous rock, I say it is heavy or not, and I note the irregular surface and all the rest. Not you, but me. You have your similar interpretative events (remembering that knowing something is an event, not some inertial thereness. One sees the stone, brings up recollections in waiting for "stone" encounters, like those geology courses you took, and applies them as the occasion allows)

but they are not mine. We, as you say, share, agree, disagree; but are distinctly separate. This is simply evident in the structure of the relationship. Now, for me to talk of a stone as independent of me, no sharing (stones do not share), no agreeing or disagreeing, puts the stone itself entirely within my interpretative affairs. But consider: these affairs are inherently social for language, thought is social. Such a claim as this takes the matter further.

One has to resist the infamous theory of psychological egoism, that says egoic systems are epistemically closed. Such IS the conclusion only if one considers a human self as a biological system. Here, biology is only one of many interpretative systems. Dasein is no more biological than it is knitting. The other is rather taken up phenomenologically: the other appears before me and is to be analyzed in the conditions of their appearing. They are not like stones in that they seem to have an interiority like mine, hence all the agreeing, disagreeing and sharing. All this intra subjective activity is what makes language possible. But this is another matter.

What do you claim exists?

What do you think is knowable/unknowable? Where do you draw your lines?

And briefly the reasons why.

see the above.

CHAPTER 1.105.

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Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, August 29, 2020 at 4:23 PM



Gertie wrote

I think this is vital too, and imo morality is in need of a new philosophical paradigm in light of scientific discoveries which frame it in terms of evolutionary utility. I have my own thoughts and would be happy to discuss it further, if I can get the basics of your ontological position locked down.

I think knowing things are interpretative events that are inherently pragmatic. I know this is a couch because when young I was exposed to conversation about couches, learned to make the association between the appearance and the word sound, began sitting on couches, watched others do this and so forth; all this is what the word couch means. Without the language, the words, there would be no shared experiences. I would know the comfort and the weight, but I would not take the couch AS a couch. It is in the taking something AS a symbol together with others of the same language community that makes language work at all.

All of this would allow for the reduction of meaning to "taking as" events, for the world taken as a world of facts, states of affairs, one fact is, as a fact, the same as any other fact. The sun is a hot place, the moon is smaller than the sun, etc. This is Wittgenstein's world; but in this world there is something that is not factual (says W. See his lecture on ethics, online, I think; I disagree) and this is ethics. My thinking is that ethics is ethics because of the existential affairs that make it so: value.

Value is simply the feeling, the hungers, the passions, the moods, the appetites and so on--IN the actuality. Once spoken, it becomes a descriptive fact: the flowers are red, I was tortured by the Nazis, it was terrible. Facts. Language makes actuality into facts. It makes us comfortable, it familiarizes, *reduces* actuality to facts (Kierkegaard). But actualities, heh, heh, are NOT facts at all! (Kierkegaard, again).

Who cares? The color red doesn't care at all. Makes no difference, for facts have no meaning beyond language and logic, and the color red is, qua a color, nothing at all. color qua color matters not at all. But value is very different! And value saturates experience. Therefore, experience is beyond the factual because experience matters in ways beyond what facts can say; beyond dictionary "facts". It is a transcendental presence (beyond factual), this loving, hating, pain, joy, delight, misery of what we are. Of course, what redness is, outside of language, is transcendental, too. But who cares? Metaethics is a Real, that is beyond the saying, but has a palpable presence that, if you will, speaks: pain is "bad", and joy is "good"; although these are terms of a language, thus, the saying/thinking of metaethical good and bad is interpretative. *What makes this matter so earth shattering is that value has meaning that is NOT made. It is meaning that is GIVEN.*

CHAPTER 1.106.

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Atla on 🕒 Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 5:15 AM

As a nondualist, this phenomenology business comes across rather bizarre to me. Do we analyze experience, trying to find its underpinnings and such? However, what we are analyzing experience with is also experience. And everything being experience, it also has no underpinnings, so what are we actually doing?

Sure, science in general is even worse off in this regard, it avoids the issue of experience entirely, pretends that it doesn't even exist (if they venture beyond instrumentalism). Even though all of science and everything science studies, is also happening in experience.

CHAPTER 1.107.

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Hereandnow on 🕒 Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 1:25 PM



Atla wrote

As a nondualist, this phenomenology business comes across rather bizarre to me. Do we analyze experience, trying to find its underpinnings and such? However, what we are analyzing experience with is also experience. And everything being experience, it also has no underpinnings, so what are we actually doing?

Sure, science in general is even worse off in this regard, it avoids the issue of experience entirely, pretends that it doesn't even exist (if they venture beyond instrumentalism). Even though all of science and everything science studies, is also happening in experience.

By my lights, that is pretty insightful. Professional philosophers (analytic ones) know this, they just are so convinced by Wittgenstein that it is folly to discuss what is not discussable. That whole Tractatus is nonsense, says Wittgenstein himself, and he was only trying to point the way out of speaking nonsense, which philosophical traditions are so full of. Metaphysics is not, not true; rather, it speaks nonsense, no sense at all, as in, the present kind of France is bald (I think that one is Russell): not true, not false. Just nonsense.

Wittgenstein says things like, logic is transcendental, value is transcendental. What does he mean? It's that one cannot conceive of logic without using logic; it can never get "behind" itself to "see" itself. This is a devastating idea for metaphysics (of course, Kant said the same thing 200 years ago); and value simply is not observable. Take all the descriptive, logically formed facts, states of affairs of the world, and there will be no value; there will be "yums" and "ughs" of course, but nothing in the facts that makes a yum "good". But there is no denying that a yum or an ugh has something beyond the merely factual. It is the source of all of our ethical shoulds and shouldn'ts, but since this good and bad never make an OBSERVABLE appearance (outside of us being IN it, tortured by Nazis, eating Haagen dazs, say), that makes it off limits to inquiry and argument. Wittgenstein notoriously turned his back (literally turned his chair around) when the discussion turned to ethics.

Philosophers in the US and GB have taken this to heart, and their discussions are very rigorous and very clear, but because they observe this strict line between sense and nonsense, they have become like Wittgenstein and turn their chairs around when it comes to talk of Being, existence, reality, metavalues, transcendence, or any other lofty theme that steps over that line. Our caring, our moods, and the entire irrational dimension of our existence becomes reducible to what is clear and scientifically affirmable, like neuronal activity and C fibers firing. They want propositional clarity! And not the vague talk about things unclear.

The trouble with this is impossible to calculate. It constitutes a dismissal of the powerful realities that make us human, and it turns wisdom into a cerebral game. Phenomenology, on the other hand, goes where philosophy is well, designed to go: to the threshold; it is a nonreductive embracing of what lies before us as it presents itself. It does not deny science at all; it simply says science is not proper philosophy. For this, one has to be honest and allow the world to be duly represented as it is. It takes seriously what has been marginalized by rigid, conservative analytic thought: to love, hate, have passion, seek beyond the formulaic. In this thinking, it is science that is marginalized, yielding to the broader ground of experience-in-the-world.

Unfortunately, to see this as a compelling idea, one has to be drawn to it in the first place. One has to look at the world and ask seriously, in a non academic way, what it means to exist, be thrown into a world to suffer, love and die. Matters like this have always been religion's prerogative. Now religion is all but undone among thinking people, but these matters, these profound matters that have driven cultures and beliefs for centuries are OPEN to philosophy without the drag of religious dogma.

I speak of it as if phenomenology were a kind of philosophy of religion, and to me, it is, for it allows the exposure of religious themes to appear as they are, as part of the structure of experience.

"Thrownness" is a Heideggerian term. But then, Heidegger was, in the end, no religious thinker, nor was Sartre. One has to go into this to dig out of it one's own place.

If the matter turns to underpinnings, the question would be, underpinnings to what? How about the underpinnings, the "white whale" underpinnings, of suffering? Ahab was not after a whale, but the reality that put the whale forth--this is what is responsible for taking the leg, not an animal. Or, the underpinnings of P, as in S knows P. well, as a friend of mine said, you're never going to get that tart to your dessert plate. Just ask Wittgenstein. He was right: all that lies out there is just transcendence, for to posit is to do so in logic.

That outthereness gets really interesting though. It is born out of in-hereness, for it is in here that we acknowledge it. If W were entirely right, this would be nonsense, but it isn't, our being thrown into existence without a grounding, a reason, a Truth. It's not nonsense at all. Transcendence is PART of immanence. But this takes some thinking. Ethics, instead of being a chair turning issue, becomes front and center. The self, the world, our being in the world, as well. See, if you ever find your self curious, Husserl's Cartesian Meditations and his epoche, the phenomenological reduction. But like I said, one has to drawn to this. One has to have a kind of passion to go beyond the play of logic.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 0 8 .

~

Atla on  Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 2:09 PM

Atla wrote

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Sure, science in general is even worse off in this regard, it avoids the issue of experience entirely, pretends that it doesn't even exist (if they venture beyond instrumentalism). Even though all of science and everything science studies, is also happening in experience.

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This is sort of an argumentative forum, so I'll say that actually there is nothing divine about experience, well none that I'm aware of anyway. It's simply what existence is like. And the contents of the male human mind are easier studied via psychology. I don't understand this obsession with phenomena at all.

CHAPTER 1.109.

~

Hereandnow on  Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 3:14 PM



Atla wrote

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Well then look at it like this: If your interest is strictly to arrive at an understanding of what the world is at the level of basic questions, aka, philosophy, and you realize that experience is not a "mirror of nature" as Rorty put it, but an opaque processing plant that manufactures meaning, logic, propositions and their truth values, appetites, ethics/value, affect, and all the rest, then you are obliged to read philosophy that reflects this. It's like in the study of rocks and minerals and not being satisfied with the mere spectacle of what they do in the world, but wanting to look at the structures that underlie what they do, the crystalline structures and their molecular composition, and the particle physics behind this, and the geological age that provided the compression, and so forth. This is exactly the kind of thing phenomenology does with experience, the manufacturing plant that makes the world, the world.

Read Heidegger, just the first few pages just to see the kind of thinking that goes into this. You will find the language off putting as you go, but then, this is true for all serious work.

CHAPTER 1.110.

~

Atla on  Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 7:50 PM

1.109. by [Hereandnow](#)

Atla wrote

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I tried reading Being and time, but unfortunately such writings usually make me physically nauseous after a few pages, I can't continue.

I may have misunderstood, but he seemed to be doing the exact of opposite of what is required to understand Being: he seemed to be addressing the question of the Being of entities. Being can't be understood as long we don't realize that in the real world, there are no entities at all.

CHAPTER 1.111.

~

Gertie on  Sunday, August 30, 2020 at 8:40 PM

HAN

If other people are only recognised as existing as part of my experience/"interpretative field", then their reported experience isn't something I can rely on in a way to slide from "my interpretive field" to broader "we" claims about the 'external world'. You either say you don't know, OR place them ontologically as part of the experience, OR as independantly existing fellow experiencers. If it's the latter, then you've made an assumption that an external world exists, independant of your experience, which you can know something about.

Or that externality appears before us and we have to analyze this phenomenologically.

Sorry that's not good enough. As far as I'm concerned you lose any warrant to make claims about "we" and "us", if you don't even assume I exist as anything beyond your experience of me.

That is why you should distinguish between knowledge claims and ontological state of affairs claims. You can't slide between the two or ignore the difference. You can't buffer your own interpretation of your experience with what I say about mine, and still place me as just another part of your experience.

CHAPTER 1.112.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 1:07 AM



Atla wrote

I tried reading Being and time, but unfortunately such writings usually make me physically nauseous after a few pages, I can't continue.

I may have misunderstood, but he seemed to be doing the exact of opposite of what is required to understand Being: he seemed to be addressing the question of the Being of entities. Being can't be understood as long we don't realize that in the real world, there are no entities at all.

Well, dasein IS an entity. It is not, however, a present at hand entity, a thing. One has to stick with it and **read through** the difficulties. In the beginning he is simply throwing the reader into his terminological world, but later, all the things he runs through so quickly, he goes into in detail.

One has to study this. It is not readable in the usual sense. Pretend you have an exam to take, or a lecture to give. You will find you can actually do it.

But then, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is the true foundation for German Idealism, and Heidegger is following Kant. Read Kant first, and Heidegger will be easier. One does need the Copernican Revolution Kant talks about to begin this properly.

Anyway, if you want to read this, or Kant and would like to talk about it, let me know.

CHAPTER 1.113.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 5:39 AM

Atla wrote

I tried reading Being and time, but unfortunately such writings usually make me physically nauseous after a few pages, I can't continue.

I may have misunderstood, but he seemed to be doing the exact of opposite of what is required to understand Being: he seemed to be addressing the question of the Being of entities. Being can't be understood as long we don't realize that in the real world, there are no entities at all.

Well, dasein IS an entity. It is not, however, a present at hand entity, a thing. One has to stick with it and read through the difficulties. In the beginning he is simply throwing the reader into his terminological world, but later, all the things he runs through so quickly, he goes into in detail.

One has to study this. It is not readable in the usual sense. Pretend you have an exam to take, or a lecture to give. You will find you can actually do it.

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Anyway, if you want to read this, or Kant and would like to talk about it, let me know.

Well I will read them if anyone can show me a valid insight of theirs I didn't already consider. I'm coming from a scientific angle, and am only interested in finding the optimal basic philosophy for my theory of everything. Nondual philosophy is both simpler and deeper than any Western idealism I've seen, and it resolves the questions of being in general, and human being, perfectly.

CHAPTER 1.114.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 2:18 PM



Atla wrote

Well I will read them if anyone can show me a valid insight of theirs I didn't already consider.

I'm coming from a scientific angle, and am only interested in finding the optimal basic philosophy for my theory of everything. Nondual philosophy is both simpler and deeper than any Western idealism I've seen, and it resolves the questions of being in general, and human being, perfectly.

Just keep in mind that "any Western idealism I've seen" has very limited content given that all Heidegger is to you is nausea. To encounter the best ideas takes work, a tearing down of assumptions that everyday thinking imposes on thought. Common sense is simply common. A last world on Heidegger. Here is a website that is short and sweet and gives an account how two of his basic ideas work: [http://compendium.kosawese.net/term/pre ... -zuhanden/](http://compendium.kosawese.net/term/pre...-zuhanden/)

CHAPTER 1.115.

~

Atla on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:03 PM

1.114. by  Hereandnow

Atla wrote

Well I will read them if anyone can show me a valid insight of theirs I didn't already consider. I'm coming from a scientific angle, and am only interested in finding the optimal basic philosophy for my theory of everything. Nondual philosophy is both simpler and deeper than any Western idealism I've seen, and it resolves the questions of being in general, and human being, perfectly.

Just keep in mind that "any Western idealism I've seen" has very limited content given that all Heidegger is to you is nausea. To encounter the best ideas takes work, a tearing down of assumptions that everyday thinking imposes on thought. Common sense is simply common.

A last world on Heidegger. Here is a website that is short and sweet and gives an account how two of his basic ideas work: [http://compendium.kosawese.net/term/pre ... -zuhanden/](http://compendium.kosawese.net/term/pre...-zuhanden/)

Thanks, yeah I guess I'll have to pass. When it comes to what I consider to be ontology, one thing we have to realize is that in the real world, there are no separate systems, entites, interactions. THAT is what happens when we properly tear down the assumptions of every human thinking.

Heidegger seems to do the opposite, he takes the everyday convention of such separate interacting things, and then perverts it into his different modes of being. I mean this is all fine, but why call it ontology. It's just male human psychology.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 1 6 .

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:03 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).



1.114. by  Hereandnow

To encounter the best ideas takes work, a tearing down of assumptions that everyday thinking imposes on thought.

When those assumptions enable human beings to solve real problems and answer real question, tearing down those assumptions seems to me a pointless academic exercise that produces nothing of value. Exactly the kind of thing that rightfully gives philosophy a bad reputation.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 1 7 .

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:14 PM



Gertie wrote

Sorry that's not good enough. As far as I'm concerned you lose any warrant to make claims about "we" and "us", if you don't even assume I exist as anything beyond your experience of me.

That is why you should distinguish between knowledge claims and ontological state of affairs claims. You can't slide between the two or ignore the difference. You can't buffer your own interpretation of your experience with what I say about mine, and still place me as just another part of your experience.

But this concern about my experience of you is not a point of concern regarding phenomenology. It is a given that there are other people, other things, for this is the way the world presents itself. The matter of showing what this is about, explaining "otherness" is not one that cancels out otherness, it is about explaining it.

If you have a hard time regarding the assumption that others exist at all, the problem you are dealing with is not the phenomenologist's, but the analytic philosopher's! Read Quine's theory of Radical translation and the indeterminacy of language. there is this paper written by David Golumbia that puts Quine and Derrida (the infamous denier of objective knowledge) on fairly equal footing regarding knowing others and other things. This issue rises up across the board and it has never, nor will it ever be resolved. Read Wittgenstein's Tractatus: It is simply absurd to think, he says, that you can extract knowledge claims' content from the logic that is used to construct it. Rorty, the same. Dewey, the same. All Kantian on this simple matter: talking about "out there" is simply nonsense. (Of course, in the post Heideggerian world, there is extraordinary work with this idea).

Phenomenology, Heidegger's and others', simply accepts that there are others, trees, chairs, people, for this is what is presented to us in the world. It does get a bit odd, but it goes like this: I know there is a world around me, and there are things and people that are there, and not me, but "me" here is defined phenomenologically, that is, as an entity that puts the stamp of "mine" and "me" on things that are contained within the "my" of being. Other things, people, are other, and I take them in *through* my dasein, personal human agency of in-the-worldness. You are clearly there and you have an agency like mine, an in the worldness. In fact, a big complaint about Heidegger is that his views of others are so strongly averse to what others do to one's own dasein: they keep questions at bay while encouraging dogmatic conformity to "the they". He thematizes the inauthenticity of existing this way, this going along with others, being blindly led and never realizing the freedom of one's authentic existence: standing before the future, unmade, and bringing forth existence out of the endless possibilities that lie in waiting out of one's personal and cultural history.

Matters of solipsism and idealism don't come up but objects are simply there, forged out of experience (see Dewey's Art as Experience and Experience and Nature), and the idea and the sense impressions are of-a piece. things are not "out there", as some metaphysical assumed things, and discovered; rather their meanings are made when we take them up. We are passive and inauthentic if we simply move anonymously through affairs. But to be a creator and make one's own life from the stand point of freedom, the present, where choices are made. Another "petty" (like solipsism) issue is freedom: how to address determinism. Freedom does not hang on such a problem. It is there, in the affairs we encounter. I am not a tree or a stone; I make my own "essence" through choice (or, I become very tree-like if I just never raise questions. Sartre called this bad faith).

Determinism contra freedom is pseudo problem; there is choice, which arises when questions are put to things. I can sit here and write or jump out the window. The fact that choice does not occur ex nihilo is obvious. Choice is defined phenomenologically, not in intuitive apriority (causality).

CHAPTER 1.118.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:18 PM



1.112. by *Hereandnow*

I should probably ask you this in the thread on *Being and Time*, but re "tearing down assumptions," since you brought it up here, what would you say is what Heidegger is even trying to address with respect to being?

Heidegger says things like, "our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the sense of being" and that he's going to address "what determines beings as beings, that in terms of which beings are already understood." I've never been able to get much of a grasp on what he's even talking about. How would you explain it? (And please, if you can, give a relatively short answer that just explains what the heck he even has in mind with respect to any issue/confusion about "being.")

CHAPTER 1.119.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:26 PM



Faustus5 wrote

When those assumptions enable human beings to solve real problems and answer real question, tearing down those assumptions seems to me a pointless academic exercise that produces nothing of value. Exactly the kind of thing that rightfully gives philosophy a bad reputation.

Then by all means, get involved, start a union, work for Microsoft. But if it wasn't for tearing down assumptions, you and I would arguing about how to best please Yahweh.

Real questions, solving problems?: depends on the problems. Philosophy is about pursuing the truth, putting aside that this concept is an inherent problem, at the level of basic assumptions. This frees us from illusions, putting questions to assumptions to see what holds up and what does not. The world, it turns out, is a very alien place at this level and in a given cultural climate, such a thing is dangerous, threatening. Talk like Quine or Wittgenstein to a Old Testament sheep herder and you will probably be shunned or worse. Who cares: there is no Yahweh, nor walking on water, nor any of that nonsense.

CHAPTER 1.120.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 4:32 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.119. by  Hereandnow

Real questions, solving problems?: depends on the problems. Philosophy is about pursuing the truth, putting aside that this concept is an inherent problem, at the level of basic assumptions.

But if you are aiming at something that doesn't tell people to behave differently, doesn't make a difference in their lives, doesn't recommend some sort of tangible change in practice other than what words we use, then you aren't aspiring to anything that deserves to be called "truth". It just becomes meaningless babble that only philosophers care about, which means it has no value and is a waste of time and energy.

CHAPTER 1.121.

~

Atla on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 5:22 PM

1.120. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

1.119. by  Hereandnow

Real questions, solving problems?: depends on the problems. Philosophy is about pursuing the truth, putting aside that this concept is an inherent problem, at the level of basic assumptions.

But if you are aiming at something that doesn't tell people to behave differently, doesn't make a difference in their lives, doesn't recommend some sort of tangible change in practice other than what words we use, then you aren't aspiring to anything that deserves to be called "truth". It just becomes meaningless babble that only philosophers care about, which means it has no value and is a waste of time and energy.

Of course "truth" sometimes turns out to have no value and makes no difference in people's lives. Sometimes it's even detrimental.

Some people like to collect stamps, some like to play football, some people like to try to solve the big questions of existence. Why are you surprised?

CHAPTER 1.122.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 7:36 PM





1.121. by Atla

Some people like to collect stamps, some like to play football, some people like to try to solve the big questions of existence. Why are you surprised?

Actually, it is as if you read my mind, Atla!

I was thinking metaphorically that this approach to philosophy ends up making it a kind of game like D&D. Players might have a very involved language and a set of conventions about how to use that language, and some players are superbly excellent at mastering the language and commit an enormous volume of data about it to memory. But that language has zero importance and meaning outside of playing the game.

Philosophy, or at least any approach to philosophy that I'll take seriously, is supposed to aim for something higher than that. And especially if you are going to start a thread crying about the "hegemony" of one of humanity's most important intellectual achievements, your philosophical approach had damn well better be more substantial than the act of collecting stamps.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 2 3 .

~

Atla on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 8:30 PM

1.122. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

1.121. by Atla

Some people like to collect stamps, some like to play football, some people like to try to solve the big questions of existence. Why are you surprised?

Actually, it is as if you read my mind, Atla!

I was thinking metaphorically that this approach to philosophy ends up making it a kind of game like D&D. Players might have a very involved language and a set of conventions about how to use that language, and some players are superbly excellent at mastering the language and commit an enormous volume of data about it to memory. But that language has zero importance and meaning outside of playing the game.

Philosophy, or at least any approach to philosophy that I'll take seriously, is supposed to aim for something higher than that. And especially if you are going to start a thread crying about the "hegemony" of one of humanity's most important intellectual achievements, your philosophical approach had damn well better be more substantial than the act of collecting stamps.

There is something pretty narrow minded about this. No one yet actually knows what the 'ultimate truth' is, so they can't tell whether for example it holds the key to humanity's future, or maybe to its destruction, or maybe it won't really affect anything at all. In the unlikely scenario that we will ever figure out the 'ultimate truth', of course.

It's like you would expect people to know in advance what the answers will be, and then only start seeking those answers when they will be useful to us.

CHAPTER 1.124.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 9:08 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.123. by Atla

No one yet actually knows what the 'ultimate truth' is, so they can't tell whether for example it holds the key to humanity's future, or maybe to its destruction, or maybe it won't really affect anything at all.

I don't even think the concept of "ultimate truth" is meaningful, so I'd suspect any philosopher who thought they were seeking it was either crazy or at least very self deluded.

CHAPTER 1.125.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 9:17 PM

1.124. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

1.123. by Atla

No one yet actually knows what the 'ultimate truth' is, so they can't tell whether for example it holds the key to humanity's future, or maybe to its destruction, or maybe it won't really affect anything at all.

I don't even think the concept of "ultimate truth" is meaningful, so I'd suspect any philosopher who thought they were seeking it was either crazy or at least very self deluded.

Well personally I think that people who aren't curious about existence, and don't ever seek the 'truth', are crazy.

CHAPTER 1.126.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, August 31, 2020 at 9:31 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.125. by Atla

Well personally I think that people who aren't curious about existence, and don't ever seek the 'truth', are crazy.

There are coherent and intelligent ways to be curious about existence, which tend to produce useful and meaningful results, and there are incoherent and dumb ways to be curious about existence, which produce nothing.

I only pay attention to folks taking the former path. Unfortunately, philosophy as a discipline is too willing to tolerate and enable those wasting their time with the latter path, which is way philosophy is so rarely paid attention to by non-philosophers.

CHAPTER 1.127.

~

Atla on  Monday, August 31, 2020 at 10:13 PM

1.126. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

1.125. by Atla

Well personally I think that people who aren't curious about existence, and don't ever seek the 'truth', are crazy.


There are coherent and intelligent ways to be curious about existence, which tend to produce useful and meaningful results, and there are incoherent and dumb ways to be curious about existence, which produce nothing.

I only pay attention to folks taking the former path. Unfortunately, philosophy as a discipline is too willing to tolerate and enable those wasting their time with the latter path, which is way philosophy is so rarely paid attention to by non-philosophers.

Yeah well academic philosophy being a failure doesn't mean that restricting ourselves to a small box is any better.

CHAPTER 1.128.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 2:42 AM



Terrapin Station wrote

I should probably ask you this in the thread on Being and Time, but re "tearing down assumptions," since you brought it up here, what would you say is what Heidegger is even trying to address with respect to being?

Heidegger says things like, "our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the sense of being" and that he's going to address "what determines beings as beings, that in terms of which beings are already understood." I've never been able to get much of a grasp on what he's even talking about. How would you explain it? (And please, if you can, give a relatively short answer that just explains what the heck he even has in mind with respect to any issue/confusion about "being.")

The following IS a short answer, and is obscenely short. I tried.

Well, what IS being? To be? And then, to exist, be real? These terms fill our vocabulary, but Being: I AM sitting; the student IS next to the window, etc.; this term is taken by H to be foundational, after all, the metaphysics of Being has a name: ontology. But Heidegger wants to take the metaphysics OUT of ontology. Christian metaphysics has all but ruined thinking soundly about what it means to be, here, an existing entity, in-the-world. Metaphysics has *reified* (made into a real thing) this for us in terms of the soul, god; Plato reified this in terms of the making verbs and adjectives and abstractions into things: The Good, Justice, Virtue, and so on.

So forget being as a substance, material thingness, the mind of god (see Kant;s Transcendental Dialectic for a formal repudiation of metaphysics), soul or spirit. H's phenomenological pov is so irritatingly difficult because he wants to construct a new vocabulary that is free of this perverse history of metaphysics, and this requires allowing the world to present itself as it is, not through he traditional interpretative systems. Another off putting thing you will find in H is that he does not think as a modern scientist. He respects science, but does not make it he foundation.

So the assumptions he wants *to tear down* are these religious, philosophical and scientific paradigms that have always been the default answer to "what is Being?" And he wants to tear down a lifestyle of complacency to open doors to what he thinks is a lost grandeur, or lost "primordality", something IN our structured experiences that has been pushed out of awareness by culture and popular religion and this pushing out has caused a crisis of identity (Nietzsche should comes to mind; see Heidegger's war on Christian and Platonic models of ontology), and we have become trivialized and lost (like Guy Debord says in the Society of the Spectacle). We are far greater than popular conceptions allow us to be, but this greatness is NOT int he theory, but the Being, the lived experience of Being, and this makes Heideggerian thought amenable to lots of extravagant, quasi mystical thinking he never endorsed, because mystics think there is something profound but lost about our Being here, too. But its not mystical, for H, it's alienation. Modern society has built for itself a condition of existential alienation through its technological culture and metaphysics.

That is the down and dirty on tearing down. He looks at individuals as either a kind of herd mentality, or enlightened and free. He, like Wittgenstein, is trying to show us the error of our ways, only for H, it has this existential dimension (which he got from Kierkegaard): a taking hold of our freedom to be the creators of our own fate as opposed to just letting it be decided for us by our sleepwalking through life. We need to take control of our own fate through our own freedom and freedom is the fleeting present moment (as the present moves in time into the future), and this

brings the matter to the structure of dasein (me, being there)

As to the "in terms of which beings are already understood" you mention, he is a phenomenologist who wants to look plainly at the world free of tradition, theory (though, well, his is a theory), popular notions, presumptions of what IS. Where to look? One looks at the world. What is the world? It is our world, the everyday world of waiting for buses and paying taxes and doing physics. this world is not, of course, handed to us; we made it (always interesting to me is that our language is not designed to tell us what a thing IS, only what it does. Nouns are really verbs!). We made politics and General Motors. This world is an historical place, built out of the ages. Every thought I can think is manufactured in some social environment, and the history of such places go way, way back, AND, it is also very personal: my history started when I was born and I grew up assimilating language and ideas, acquired what E D Hirsch called cultural literacy.

So when we wake up in the morning, we speak, think, live and breath in one of these cultures, and this culture is not only what I have, but what I *am*, my dasein, and every utterance, a remembrance, is done in language and culture, and this is the CONTENT of dasein, of what I am. The FORM, or STRUCTURE of dasein is TIME. A very big deal. The structure of experience is time: past, present future. As I write now, the language rises up up, associated thoughts mingle to produce propositions, ideas, questions in thought and feeling, and these are projected into the unmade future (a very important idea: the future is unmade, a blank, nothingness. Hmmm. What shall I do next? Whatever it is, it will be my doing, my creation).

All this (this structure of past, present future in which historically produced ideas, institutions are projected into the future in the creative act of an authentic or inauthentic dasein, that is, a self that is either asleep at the wheel and just rolls through life, or one that has awakened to freedom and possibilities) is *presupposed* by science, religion, by anything you can think of, and this is why a temporal ontology of dasein's production of existence is THE ontology that underlies all else.

I hope that is not too bizarre sounding. I have quite forgotten what sounds normal in discussions like this.

CHAPTER 1.129.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 2:58 AM



Faustus5 wrote

But if you are aiming at something that doesn't tell people to behave differently, doesn't make a difference in their lives, doesn't recommend some sort of tangible change in practice other than what words we use, then you aren't aspiring to anything that deserves to be called "truth". It just becomes meaningless babble that only philosophers care about, which means it has no value and is a waste of time and energy.

Grrrr. Meaningless babble is insulting. Philosophers don't care about meaningless babble. Here is what meaningless babble is: it is what is produced when opinion exceeds understanding.

CHAPTER 1.130.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 4:13 AM

Well, what IS being? To be? And then, to exist, be real? These terms fill our vocabulary, but Being: I AM sitting; the student IS next to the window, etc.; this term is taken by H to be foundational, after all, the metaphysics of Being has a name: ontology. But Heidegger wants to take the metaphysics OUT of ontology. Christian metaphysics has all but ruined thinking soundly about what it means to be, here, an existing entity, in-the-world. Metaphysics has reified (made into a real thing) this for us in terms of the soul, god; Plato reified this in terms of the making verbs and adjectives and abstractions into things: The Good, Justice, Virtue, and so on.

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So the assumptions he wants to tear down are these religious, philosophical and scientific paradigms that have always been the default answer to "what is Being?" And he wants to tear down a lifestyle of complacency to open doors to what he thinks is a lost grandeur, or lost "primordially", something IN our structured experiences that has been pushed out of awareness by culture and popular religion and this pushing out has caused a crisis of identity (Nietzsche should come to mind; see Heidegger's war on Christian and Platonic models of ontology), and we have become trivialized and lost (like Guy Debord says in the Society of the Spectacle). We are far greater than popular conceptions allow us to be, but this greatness is NOT in the theory, but the Being, the lived experience of Being, and this makes Heideggerian thought amenable to lots of extravagant, quasi mystical thinking he never endorsed, because mystics think there is something profound but lost about our Being here, too. But it's not mystical, for H, it's alienation. Modern society has built for itself a condition of existential alienation through its technological culture and metaphysics.

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As to the "in terms of which beings are already understood" you mention, he is a phenomenologist who wants to look plainly at the world free of tradition, theory (though, well, his is a theory), popular notions, presumptions of what IS. Where to look? One looks at the world. What is the world? It is our world, the everyday world of waiting for buses and paying taxes and doing physics. This world is not, of course, handed to us; we made it (always interesting to me is that our language is not designed to tell us what a thing IS, only what it does. Nouns are really verbs!). We made politics and General Motors. This world is an historical place, built out of the ages. Every thought I can think is manufactured in some social environment, and the history of such places goes way, way back, AND, it is also very personal: my history started when I was born and I grew up assimilating language and ideas, acquired what E D Hirsch called cultural literacy.

So when we wake up in the morning, we speak, think, live and breathe in one of these cultures, and this culture is not only what I have, but what I am, my dasein, and every utterance, a remembrance, is done in language and culture, and this is the CONTENT of dasein, of what I am. The FORM, or STRUCTURE of dasein is TIME. A very big deal. The structure of experience is time: past, present future. As I write now, the language rises up up, associated thoughts mingle to produce propositions, ideas, questions in thought and feeling, and these are projected into the unmade future (a very important idea: the future

is unmade, a blank, nothingness. Hmmm. What shall I do next? Whatever it is, it will be my doing, my creation).

All this (this structure of past, present future in which historically produced ideas, institutions are projected into the future in the creative act of an authentic or inauthentic dasein, that is, a self that is either asleep at the wheel and just rolls through life, or one that has awakened to freedom and possibilities) is presupposed by science, religion, by anything you can think of, and this is why a temporal ontology of dasein's production of existence is THE ontology that underlies all else.

I hope that is not too bizarre sounding. I have quite forgotten what sounds normal in discussions like this.

I can't really fathom why it's better to base 'ontology' on a certain male human psychological experience of being and acting through time (and get infatuated with it), instead of basing it on the entire natural world. And not even investigating what being is fundamentally, anyway.

CHAPTER 1.131.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:29 AM

Gertie wrote

Sorry that's not good enough. As far as I'm concerned you lose any warrant to make claims about "we" and "us", if you don't even assume I exist as anything beyond your experience of me.

That is why you should distinguish between knowledge claims and ontological state of affairs claims. You can't slide between the two or ignore the difference. You can't buffer your own interpretation of your experience with what I say about mine, and still place me as just another part of your experience.

But this concern about my experience of you is not a point of concern regarding phenomenology. It is a given that there are other people, other things, for this is the way the world presents itself. The matter of showing what this is about, explaining "otherness" is not one that cancels out otherness, it is about explaining it.

Alright!

(Although it seems to me to not to be about explaining human nature, but describing and re-framing it and offering life lessons from what I've seen so far. Or how does it explain the existence of consciousness?).

So - you make an ontological state of affairs assumption that there is a world which exists independently of your experience of it. Experience is therefore, amongst other things, a form of representation of that world.

A world which you share with other people, and compare notes about. And hence we have the inter-subjective basis of a working model of the world we share. A world where there are independently existing things and processes. We can't know about these other things and people from a first-hand pov, but we can agree on limited and flawed descriptions based in our shared observations

and reasoning. And we end up with a (flawed and incomplete) scientific, materialist working model of the world.

Agree so far?

That model contains an evolutionary explanation of why we are the way we are, physically, and why we have certain types of experience. A limited, flawed explanation, which doesn't explain the source of experience (but then neither does phenomenology?). But does give a broad utility-based explanation for things like our caring, social pre-dispositions, our competitive and tribal instincts, why we like chocolate and so on.

So what is your problem with that approach to human nature? Where do you draw the line on explanations which arise in the world we share, and why? Presumably you accept what we call gravity tells us something real about the world, and you accept evolution tells us something real about why our bodies are the way they are - so why draw the line at what evolution tells us about why we are the way we are mentally?

Phenomenology, Heidegger's and others', simply accepts that there are others, trees, chairs, people, for this is what is presented to us in the world. It does get a bit odd, but it goes like this: I know there is a world around me, and there are things and people that are there, and not me, but "me" here is defined phenomenologically, that is, as an entity that puts the stamp of "mine" and "me" on things that are contained within the "my" of being.

OK, I'd just call that the first-person pov which is the nature of conscious experience, but I think we're saying the same thing.

Other things, people, are other, and I take them in through my dasein, personal human agency of in-the-worldness... You are clearly there and you have an agency like mine, an in the worldness.

You seem to be introducing Agency as something fundamental to being a conscious human here, not requiring explanation, but rather just contextualising it as part of our relationship with the world. OK, but it's another assumption isn't it?

Matters of solipsism and idealism don't come up

Only **after** you make the assumption a real world exists independently of your experience.

but objects are simply there, forged out of experience (see Dewey's Art as Experience and Experience and Nature), and the idea and the sense impressions are of-a piece. things are not "out there", as some metaphysical assumed things, and discovered; rather their meanings are made when we take them up.


If you're saying their **meaning to us** is created by us, that's fine. But you clarified that they are assumed to ontologically be there as the state of affairs, as somethings, to be discovered in a real world existing independently of anyone discovering them.

CHAPTER 1.132.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:34 AM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*.  Evidence [here](#).

1.128. by [Hereandnow](#)


But its not mystical, for H, it's alienation. Modern society has built for itself a condition of existential alienation through its technological culture and metaphysics.

H's philosophy is going to be absolutely powerless and utterly, even laughably feeble in addressing these kinds of issues. The way you get at alienation is by substantially changing the material conditions and power people have in their lives. It is political.

Babbling about ontology and metaphysics will only waste everyone's time and actually serves the interests of those for whom it is essential the rest of us stay alienated.

CHAPTER 1.133.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 1:27 PM



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Keep in mind that it was **religion** that put Trump in power, and reading Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Jaspers and the rest is is a philosophical response to religion that cancels out its crudity and silliness. The fact that others besides philosophers don't read it is beside the point (though keep in mind that the Bush administration hired followers of Leo Strauss, a confirmed Heideggerian); very few read physics either, and probably more read philosophy than physics, the latter being so prohibitively strong in mathematics.

Heidegger is part of an ongoing conversation humanity is having with itself (your man Rorty puts it, a huge fan of Heidegger), and it is not so much Heidegger's definitive thinking as his contribution to the project of humanity trying to figure out what it is all about at the level of basic questions.

Consider: powerless and the rest? Philosophy can have very powerful effects on human affairs. Marx? But Marx was putting Hegel to novel use, and Hegel was FAR more far flung than Heidegger.

Marx's work overturned global affairs completely, you will remember. Heidegger was strongly influenced by Nietzsche, and N was very much an influence in the rise of Nazism. Husserl actually believed he had discovered the true calling of philosophy that would open doors to religious experience hitherto closed, unrealized. Was he right? Did Husserl "discover" the essence of religion? You would have to read him to find out.

Finally, the merit of a thing is not to weighed solely on the social changes it brings. Buddhism, a monumental presence in the evolution of societies, is all about a single human's interiority.

That part about keeping people alienated is so far removed from actuality it makes me wonder if you have read anything at all. One reason you find all of this so bothersome is that you don't read. This thinking screams rationalization: Too much work to understand it; must be worthless.

CHAPTER 1.134.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 1:28 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

I should probably ask you this in the thread on Being and Time, but re "tearing down assumptions," since you brought it up here, what would you say is what Heidegger is even trying to address with respect to being?

Heidegger says things like, "our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the sense of being" and that he's going to address "what determines beings as beings, that in terms of which beings are already understood." I've never been able to get much of a grasp on what he's even talking about. How would you explain it? (And please, if you can, give a relatively short answer that just explains what the heck he even has in mind with respect to any issue/confusion about "being.")

The following IS a short answer, and is obscenely short. I tried.

Well, what IS being? To be? And then, to exist, be real? These terms fill our vocabulary, but Being: I AM sitting; the student IS next to the window, etc.; this term is taken by H to be foundational, after all, the metaphysics of Being has a name: ontology. But Heidegger wants to take the metaphysics OUT of ontology. Christian metaphysics has all but ruined thinking soundly about what it means to be, here, an existing entity, in-the-world. Metaphysics has reified (made into a real thing) this for us in terms of the soul, god; Plato reified this in terms of the making verbs and adjectives and abstractions into things: The Good, Justice, Virtue, and so on.

So forget being as a substance, material thingness, the mind of god (see Kant;s Transcendental Dialectic for a formal repudiation of metaphysics), soul or spirit. H's phenomenological pov is so irritatingly difficult because he wants to construct a new vocabulary that is free of this perverse history of metaphysics, and this requires allowing the world to present itself as it is, not through the traditional interpretative systems. Another off putting thing you will find in H is that he does not think as a modern scientist. He respects science, but does not make it the foundation.

So the assumptions he wants to tear down are these religious, philosophical and scientific paradigms that have always been the default answer to "what is Being?" And he wants to tear down a lifestyle of complacency to open doors to what he thinks is a lost grandeur, or lost "primordality", something IN our structured experiences that has been pushed out of awareness by culture and popular religion and this pushing out has caused a crisis of identity (Nietzsche should come to mind; see Heidegger's war on Christian and Platonic models of ontology), and we have become trivialized and lost (like Guy Debord says in the Society of the Spectacle). We are far greater than popular conceptions allow us to be, but this greatness is NOT in the theory, but the Being, the lived experience of Being, and this makes Heideggerian thought amenable to lots of extravagant, quasi mystical thinking he never endorsed, because mystics think there is something profound but lost about our Being here, too. But it's not mystical, for H, it's alienation. Modern society has built for itself a condition of existential alienation through its technological culture and metaphysics.

That is the down and dirty on tearing down. He looks at individuals as either a kind of herd mentality, or enlightened and free. He, like Wittgenstein, is trying to show us the error of our ways, only for H, it has this existential dimension (which he got from Kierkegaard): a taking hold of our freedom to be the creators of our own fate as opposed to just letting it be decided for us by our sleepwalking through life. We need to take control of our own fate through our own freedom and freedom is the fleeting present moment (as the present moves in time into the future), and this brings the matter to the structure of *dasein* (me, being there)

As to the "in terms of which beings are already understood" you mention, he is a phenomenologist who wants to look plainly at the world free of tradition, theory (though, well, his is a theory), popular

notions, presumptions of what IS. Where to look? One looks at the world. What is the world? It is our world, the everyday world of waiting for buses and paying taxes and doing physics. this world is not, of course, handed to us; we made it (always interesting to me is that our language is not designed to tell us what a thing IS, only what it does. Nouns are really verbs!). We made politics and General Motors. This world is an historical place, built out of the ages. Every thought I can think is manufactured in some social environment, and the history of such places go way, way back, AND, it is also very personal: my history started when I was born and I grew up assimilating language and ideas, acquired what E D Hirsch called cultural literacy.

So when we wake up in the morning, we speak, think, live and breath in one of these cultures, and this culture is not only what I have, but what I am, my dasein, and every utterance, a remembrance, is done in language and culture, and this is the CONTENT of dasein, of what I am. The FORM, or STRUCTURE of dasein is TIME. A very big deal. The structure of experience is time: past, present future. As I write now, the language rises up up, associated thoughts mingle to produce propositions, ideas, questions in thought and feeling, and these are projected into the unmade future (a very important idea: the future is unmade, a blank, nothingness. Hmmm. What shall I do next? Whatever it is, it will be my doing, my creation).

All this (this structure of past, present future in which historically produced ideas, institutions are projected into the future in the creative act of an authentic or inauthentic dasein, that is, a self that is either asleep at the wheel and just rolls through life, or one that has awakened to freedom and possibilities) is presupposed by science, religion, by anything you can think of, and this is why a temporal ontology of dasein's production of existence is THE ontology that underlies all else.

I hope that is not too bizarre sounding. I have quite forgotten what sounds normal in discussions like this.

It's not *bizarre*-sounding, but very flakey/flightly/unfocused-sounding--like we can't concentrate on something for more than a fleeting moment before we move on to something else. It's kind of stream-of-consciousness, which is only going to be pertinent to the consciousness of the person expressing it.

And it doesn't really address the issue I have with it. "Being" isn't something difficult to understand or address. "Being," or "to be," in one of its primary senses is to exist, occur, be present, be instantiated. Any of those terms will do if someone, for some reason, doesn't understand "being" on its own. It's opposed to, say, imagining something to exist, occur, etc. that doesn't actually exist or occur. So what is the big issue there?

"Being" in its other primary sense refers to entities, often reserved for biological entities--things that have metabolism, cell reproduction, etc.

So in two very short, simple paragraphs, I've solved "What is being," in the two most popular senses of the term.

There are a bunch of things you mention that we could address, such as "Heidegger wants to take the metaphysics OUT of ontology." The bulk of metaphysics IS ontology. That's primarily what metaphysics IS. So it doesn't make much sense to talk about "taking metaphysics out of ontology." It's like saying "We're going to take chemistry out of the study of molecular interactions."

If Heidegger was primarily addressing stuff like "Christian metaphysics" being wrapped up with

"being," then that's a factor of both his historico-cultural milieu and his unique history (as the son of someone who worked for a church, etc.). "Christian metaphysics" isn't wrapped up with notions of being in general, and that certainly had nothing to do with *my* historico-cultural milieu or my familial experiences. So if that was part of what he was addressing, he probably should have made this more explicit.

CHAPTER 1.135.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 3:10 PM



Atla wrote

I can't really fathom why it's better to base 'ontology' on a certain male human psychological experience of being and acting through time (and get infatuated with it), instead of basing it on the entire natural world. And not even investigating what being is fundamentally, anyway.

That is THE anticipated response. It is a complete reversal of this kind of thinking that Heidegger (and Husserl) is looking for. to think of a discipline like psychology is the THINK and experience! Before talk about "a certain male human psychological experience" (male??) we need to ask, **what is it to think at all?** The structure of thought as thought is at issue. Natural world? Where did the term "natural" come from? You've got to ask THE major question: what is language? To talk about physics, psychology, or anything at all, as ruling the day, you have to see that you are talking, thinking. Kant asked the question, what is reason, logic, but Heidegger is saying that this is not sufficient for an analytic of our Being Here, which is filled with affect and analyzable structure.

I know this is odd to think like this, but to understand Heidegger you have to put aside scientific, empirical models altogether. I look out at the world and all before me is "understood". But all of my understanding rests with predication. one has to ask what is predication? there is a bird. the bird is black and sits on a branch. What is sitting? Before language was in place so solidly, and humans or protohumans were grunting and pointing, there was a lot of sitting, but no language until grunts became representational and symbolic. the noise "sitting" and its denotative value, actual sitting, has its phonic and denotative values in this nebulous symbolic world of reference. BUT: once there is the word, and it is in place, has this whole affair become more than the mere constitutive function of a designated term? Has the world "revealed" itself? Or have people just found practical ways to deal with it?

Same goes with ALL words. They don't bring out something there already, they just impose a representational system upon what is there. Meaning is social in nature; physics is, at the level of ontology, a social affair for the language that is used to construct meaning in doing physics is essentially a social construct that has pragmatic utility; i.e., it WORKS.

Further analysis: Language is just an extension of a primordial alinguistic condition, which is reflected in the conditional propositional form of if...then. What is sitting? It occurs in time. Sitting was not always so easy and infants fall over all the time. But the learning process, represented in language: *If* I move the leg just so, *then* stability fails, so this time a bit more, and

then, no falling. Obviously infants do not think like this at all, but to think like this is language's way to take this basic form of struggling to overcome a problem AS a linguistic form. this struggle to sit up straight is inherently pragmatic, and the meaning that settles in the understanding is the same. Now, what turns language's noises into symbols? Is it not the same as well? Listening to sounds, figuring out their referents, finally associating sounds with things, all by trial and error, and the residua of all this in later life is, "pass the salt," and "what a fine day" and "philosophy is babbling nonsense".

This is a pragmatist's view (obliquely Heideggerian) of meaning and language.


The point of all this is to take the matter to foundations, try to get to the ontological rock bottom of what being in the world is. Physics is not at all wrong, to take an example, but it is analyzable in more fundamental terms.

Of course, when one talks like this, one is talking, thinking, and the same critique applies to this, rendering talk about foundational ontology no better than anything else. This may be difficult to get, but Heidegger's principle thesis is hermeneutics, interpretation. The reason why Heidegger is right is because he does not give his ontology any status what works in the given milieu of the questions being addressed. IF you want to talk about fundatonal ontology, THEN this is the most descriptive and error free. All language is contingent and its aboutness is linked directly to utility, and NOT what is independent of experience. To even SAY such a thing, is, says Wittgenstein, nonsense.

Btw, some of the above is not from H. But close.

CHAPTER 1.136.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 3:20 PM



1.135. by [Hereandnow](#)

we need to ask, what is it to think at all?

Why would that be mysterious to anyone? It's simply brain processes that amount to having ideas, thinking of concepts, reasoning, daydreaming--all sorts of things. What's the mystery supposed to be?

The structure of thought as thought is at issue.

It's not clear what "the structure of thought *as thought*" is supposed to refer to. Are we saying that thought could be structured as something other than thought? That seems like it would be contradictory.

You've got to ask THE major question: what is language?

Again, it's no big mystery what language is. We could even just look up the term in any dictionary.

Heidegger is saying that this is not sufficient for an analytic of our Being Here

But what the heck is even the idea of "an analytic of 'our Being Here'"? It's not at all clear what the question or issue even is. What are we wondering about? What's the mystery to be solved there?

CHAPTER 1.137.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 3:32 PM

Atla wrote

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Btw, some of the above is not from H. But close.

I honestly can't believe that this is all there is to it.

Yes, first we just examine the outside world etc.

Yes, the second step is that then we reverse the whole thing, and get into a long exploration about how human thinking etc. even works. And yes this is all distinctly male thinking.

So where is the third step after this, where we return to placing ontology into the entire natural world, but this time we do it properly?

CHAPTER 1.138.

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Atla on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 4:02 PM

1.137. by Atla

1.135. by Hereandnow

Before talk about "a certain male human psychological experience" (male??)

...

And yes this is all distinctly male thinking.

...

Just an example for this side-issue btw, from the link you gave me:

Once one has learned to use it, the mouse, in a sense, 'disappears' from conscious attention. One acts ('immediately') through the mouse as an extension of one's hand as one selects objects, operates menus, navigates pages, and so on. The mouse is, in Heidegger's terms, ready-to-hand, i.e. it fits ('seamlessly') into a meaningful network of actions, purposes and functions. In being part of one's action, it becomes part of 'oneself', 'one's body', part of a domain of 'ownness' or 'mineness'.

And similarly when a man is driving a car, the car sort of becomes part of the man's body, extension, 'oneself'. As far as I know this doesn't happen for women though, when a woman is driving a car, then the car is what the woman is in.

CHAPTER 1.139.

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Gertie on  Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 7:12 PM

1.138. by Atla

1.137. by Atla

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I sometimes wonder if it was an ancestral new mother who first pondered in some way about the nature of self and the other. Imagine having something inexplicably pop out of you, and gradually become an independent person much like you. Freaky ****. Probably the male shaman who got to make up some story about it and what it all means.

CHAPTER 1.140.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 4:13 AM

1.139. by Gertie

1.138. by Atla

Just an example for this side-issue btw, from the link you gave me:

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I guess I'd rather doubt that.. the female 'sense of being' seems to be wildly different from the male one. I'd say the male sense of being is sort of a 'strong singular presence', and the female sense of being is sort of a 'weaker plural presence that is somehow both several voices/beings and one being at the same time, without a strong center'. I tried asking women a few times what it's like to be..

well.. being sort of distributed across space, and being.. sort of a coming together of 'several'.. that's pretty unimaginable to a man. Likewise women can't really grasp that men are genuinely singular like that, I think they might be freaked out by it.

Apparently they literally think in parallel threads, parallel windows most of time, like 3-4-5. One of them said that her mind is automatically jumping so fast between them, that this jumping becomes unnoticable, and what remains is the parallelity.

Well anyway thanks to these things, women seem to be closer to nature and less prone to be abstract, they have a weaker sense of distinct self. And mentally healthy women naturally percieve their offspring as a part, extension of themselves (so it's tough when that offspring then grows up and starts to rebel), and they are of course also genetically wired to anticipate something popping out of them.

Also, women have much more interconnected hemispheres. They don't seem to tend to have this 'internal discourse' between the two hemispheres, that men are sometimes prone to, especially when affected by certain mental problems. Maybe this internal discourse is what really kickstarted the sense of self?

Also, well, men's brains are bigger. There is this mysterious phenomenon of raw self-awareness that seems to occur in a few species, and is essential to humanity. Hard to say where it comes from, as it doesn't seem to be connected to any particular brain region, personally I think that it's related to sheer neural numbers are well. I've come to think that on average, men have a somewhat stronger natural self-awareness than women.

Etc. there are a lot more cognitive differences. The Buddha, Kant, Heidegger etc. these guys did in-depth investigations of the workings of the male mind. Doing these invastigation is crucial, but why we would base ontology on the male mind, I don't understand that one.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 4 1 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 5:49 AM

1.140. by Atla

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Sorry, I couldn't resist typing the below fantasy. 😊 Feel free to skip it. 😊

There might be a strange missing piece of the puzzle by the way, when it comes to the birth of the sense of self. Something no philosopher could have guessed, here once again we need the aid of science. Now this is of course highly speculative, but there seems to be growing evidence that

around 12000–13000 years ago, our Sun went through a much more violent phase.

Plasma eruptions frequently may have hit the Earth back then, which even forced some people to live underground. Radiation levels may have increased, and maybe one such massive eruption is what ended the Ice Age overnight as well, scorching the Earth.

My current hypothesis here is that these increased radiation levels might have thrust people into semi-psychotic states. And so they had to literally fight a mental war inside, in order to not go insane and die, to remain functional. Psychotic states can also amplify the internal dialogue between the two hemispheres. Those who managed to keep it together (arguably they were more intelligent on average), may have emerged with a much stronger sense of self, due to this struggle, having to keep oneself together. The lingering self-awareness of the Ice Age human got shaped into a 'self', an 'entity'.

That was the 'me', and they looked up the sky and maybe they saw 'others' as well, huge sometimes anthropomorphic figures in the sky, like maybe supernatural, godlike beings. There literally might have been huge human-like shapes hanging in the sky, caused by plasma eruptions hitting the atmosphere. Apparently, petroglyphs depicting these shapes were found all over the planet.

So then we got places like Tell Qaramel and Göbekli Tepe, some of the first expressions of the self. Later humanity recessed, going through a great flood and such that lasted for millennia, but the sense of self already may have taken shape by then. Or maybe it even got lost in some places, who knows. When the Harappan and Sumerian civs emerged, they already seemed to have a self.

CHAPTER 1.142.

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Atla on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 6:10 AM

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My current hypothesis here is that these increased radiation levels might have thrust people into semi-psychotic states. And so they had to literally fight a mental war inside, in order to not go insane and die, to remain functional. Psychotic states can also amplify the internal dialogue between the two hemispheres. Those who managed to keep it together (arguably they were more intelligent on average), may have emerged with a much stronger sense of self, due to this struggle, having to keep oneself together. The lingering self-awareness of the Ice Age human got shaped into a 'self', an 'entity'.

That was the 'me', and they looked up the sky and maybe they saw 'others' as well, huge sometimes anthropomorphic figures in the sky, like maybe supernatural, godlike beings. There literally might have been huge human-like shapes hanging in the sky, caused by plasma eruptions hitting the atmosphere. Apparently, petroglyphs depicting these shapes were found all over the planet.

So then we got places like Tell Qaramel and Göbekli Tepe, some of the first expressions of the self. Later humanity recessed, going through a great flood and such that lasted for millennia, but the sense of self already may have taken shape by then. Or maybe it even got lost in some places, who knows. When the Harappan and Sumerian civs emerged, they already seemed to have a self.

Later, maybe around the Bronze Age, may have come the last step, when this rather passive self that humans had, coalesced into the autonomous ego, the ego took on a life of its own. The world got turned inside out, and now we were the ego itself, that came into this world.

Then in the East, they relatively quickly figured out that wait a second, that's not actually how things are 'supposed to be', they learned to see through the ego. In the West this never happened though, so even today all of our philosophy and culture is based on the ego, no matter how subtle the issue is. Now even science is telling us that there isn't really any autonomous ego to be found anywhere.

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 1:08 PM



Yikes re thinking that there's a "male way of thinking" versus a "female way of thinking" that are more different than any two arbitrary males are to each other, or any two arbitrary females are to each other.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 4 4 .

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Hereandnow on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 1:37 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

It's not bizarre-sounding, but very flakey/flightly/unfocused-sounding--like we can't concentrate on something for more than a fleeting moment before we move on to something else. It's kind of stream-of-consciousness, which is only going to be pertinent to the consciousness of the person expressing it.

Unfamiliar ideas thrown out there. I see.

And it doesn't really address the issue I have with it. "Being" isn't something difficult to understand or address. "Being," or "to be," in one of its primary senses is to exist, occur, be present, be instantiated. Any of those terms will do if someone, for some reason, doesn't understand "being" on its own. It's opposed to, say, imagining something to exist, occur, etc. that doesn't actually exist or occur. So what is the big issue there?

You don't see why talk about Being is an issue. This is indeed a problem and there is little I can do to correct it. It a bit like Philosophers come in various kinds. Some are just geeks who love to tinker with logic and arguments. They could have been anything. Rorty talks like this in his part biographical Social Hope saying he was good and logic, could have studied history, and in the end, he abandoned philosophy to teach literature, infamously claiming the field had come to its end. Philosophers like this, brilliant, many of them, are very different from the other kind, those who have an almost religious zeal (or even categorically religious, Kierkegaard, Buber, Levinas, and others) to know what it means to be here. Then there are those who straddle the fence, like Wittgenstein and Heidegger and Husserl. Wittgenstein was very passionate about the human condition, both he and Russell, yet he helped define the epistemic basis for positivism. Being for Wittgenstein is a nonsense term, and the best one can do is follow science.

The ideas I put out here are, obviously, derived from what I've read. After going through quite a bit, I have determined Witt types to be intuitively deficient. Read some of his biographical papers and this guy is deeply concerned about human suffering, but he is so strong in the rigor of thinking, he draws an uncrossable line between sense and nonsense (btw, His Philosophical Investigations I have not read much of. Soon) and in doing so he does not see that there is no line. Philosophy at its best is not line driven but OPEN, a place of many lines, and this is Heidegger. But Heidegger was NOT a transcendentalist. Like W, he keeps a firm eye out on keeping metaphysical thinking at bay. I follow Heidegger much more than I do W because he emphasizes openness, the present and the future. It is the PAST that binds us, though, the history of our culture and language that determines our possibilities.

Among these, I find favor with the Levinasians and Buberians and the rest. Strong of openness, emphasis on the ethical dimension of human existence.

Perhaps you are more like Rorty, who, as I say of Wittgenstein, is just not able to see how Being is more than an intellectual notion, a vacuous puzzle piece. Quine, I read, was a devout Catholic. A profoundly gifted intellectual philosopher...a Catholic??? But he was likely with Wittgenstein: religion and ethics is of dire importance in thinking at the basic level, it looms large as the most conspicuous thing there is (remember, I am speculating reasonably, not saying what he said exactly). One simply cannot talk about it philosophically. Of course, I beg to differ: Many "talk" about it and make sense.

I guess you are what you read. Quine never read Heidegger, nor Heidegger Quine.

There are a bunch of things you mention that we could address, such as "Heidegger wants to take the metaphysics OUT of ontology." The bulk of metaphysics IS ontology. That's primarily what metaphysics IS. So it doesn't make much sense to talk about "taking metaphysics out of ontology." It's like saying "We're going to take chemistry out of the study of molecular interactions."

There is a gleam of insight in this. But read again: All of those traditional default ontologies that have filled history are senseless. Read Heidegger's Introduction: The Necessity, Structure and Priority of the Question of Being. I mean, just read the first pages. It is NOT technical; not yet. He talks about being, the indefinable, universal, the all too familiar but then the furthest from understanding (the more familiar you feel it to be, the further away you are, **the problem lying in large part IN the unquestioning familiarity**. IF, and I think this of utmost importance, you are going to investigate something, the grounds for the investigation are already at hand. This is what Kant did with reason. Look to what is THERE in the world that makes ontology a meaningful concept to begin with; and do not simply start with given concepts, all of which do nothing but make far flung, unjustifiable claims. Surely you see: Taking the metaphysics out of ontology is like taking the metaphysics out of God: Forget all that fatuous talk about a powerful man in the sky. what is there IN the world that gives rise to the such a thing?; what is there, in the structure of our existence that is inherently religious and is not instantly dismissable (atheism generally attacks theism taken AS this clumsy historical idea, making such atheism just as fatuous). (One the matter of religion, this could be taken up in another thread. It is an issue in and of itself.)

This is Heidegger's project: this term Being is at the heart of philosophy, for all endeavors of thought expire at this one terminus: ontology; it is where language MEETS the end of meaningful language.

Heidegger's answer: a hermeneutic ontology.

If Heidegger was primarily addressing stuff like "Christian metaphysics" being wrapped up with "being," then that's a factor of both his historico-cultural milieu and his unique history (as the son of someone who worked for a church, etc.). "Christian metaphysics" isn't wrapped up with notions of being in general, and that certainly had nothing to do with my historico-cultural milieu or my familial experiences. So if that was part of what he was addressing, he probably should have made this more explicit.

The "historico-cultural milieu" as it is endowed with specific content is incidental. You could have been born in BCE India, with Vedic hymns filling your world. Bad metaphysical thinking per se is what is on the chopping block, and Heidegger happens to be born into Western philosophical culture. (Interesting to note, however, that H did think Buddhism possessed the possibility of a new language that could open up experience.)

CHAPTER 1.145.

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Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 2:02 PM



1.144. by *Hereandnow*

those who have an almost religious zeal (or even categorically religious, Kierkegaard, Buber, Levinas, and others) to know what it means to be here.

"What it means to be here," on my view, is a rather juvenile/pre-analytical-to-nonsensical question. There is no general/universal "meaning" or "purpose" in that sense. Meaning/purpose only exist insofar as an individual thinks about anything in that way. This should be obvious with even the slightest philosophical or scientific exploration of the world.

Perhaps you are more like Rorty, who, as I say of Wittgenstein, is just not able to see how Being is more than an intellectual notion, a vacuous puzzle piece.

If the puzzle is "what it means to be here," then the puzzle is due to a misunderstanding of what things like meaning, purpose, etc. are.

Religion on my view is something that we'll be far better off without, once we can get enough people to see how absolutely silly it is, and ethics is something we do best with once we realize that it's simple ways that people (as individuals, influenced by their cultures) feel/dispositions they have towards interpersonal behavior.

Look to what is THERE in the world that makes ontology a meaningful concept to begin with; and do not simply start with given concepts, all of which do nothing but make far flung, unjustifiable claims.

Meaning and concepts are something that individuals *do*. They're not something that exists independently of anyone. So the sentence above reflects a serious misunderstanding of these things that's going to lead to a lot of errors in one's philosophizing.

CHAPTER 1.146.

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Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 2:04 PM

Oops, that should have read "ethics is something we do best with once we realize that it's *simply* ways that people (as individuals, influenced by their cultures) feel/dispositions they have towards interpersonal behavior.



CHAPTER 1.147.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 2:46 PM

1.13. by Terrapin Station

This is for everyone who has these issues, which is many of our posters with a continental bent (and I should probably make this a separate thread): it could be an issue of reading and thinking a great deal about this stuff, and your mind has a tendency to "race." That could easily lead to rambling writing that seems disconnected to readers.

You'd not want to change anything when writing your first draft, but when reading it back to yourself before posting (which hopefully everyone is doing), you need to take a deep breath, slow down, and remember that people aren't already "in your mind." They may not have read everything you've read. They certainly won't have had the same thoughts about it even if they did read it. They're not going to already know all of the interconnections you're thinking. And you need to be careful when it comes to interconnections, background assumptions, etc. that are second-nature to you--again, other people are not already in your mind, so these things probably won't be second-nature to them.

A good stance to assume is something like "Imagine that I'm addressing reasonably intelligent high school students who have no special background in what I'm talking about. If I put myself in their place while reading back what I wrote, would they be able to understand it and follow me? Am I presenting an argument that would seem plausible to them?" Your audience might have a much more extensive background in the subject matter than this, but it doesn't hurt to assume that they do not.

It's a bit similar to the idea of needing to "show your work" in mathematics class. The teacher already knows how to work out the problem, and they'll often know that you know how to work it out, too, but there's value, including for your own thinking, in setting a requirement to spell out just how you're arriving at the conclusions you're arriving at. That can seem laborious, perhaps, but if you're really saying something that would be worthwhile for other people to read and think about, isn't it worth putting the work in?

Good thoughts there, TP. :-)

CHAPTER 1.148.

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Hereandnow on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 2:52 PM



Gertie wrote

(Although it seems to me to not to be about explaining human nature, but describing and re-framing it and offering life lessons from what I've seen so far. Or how does it explain the existence of consciousness?).

By my lights, it doesn't explain the existence of consciousness. I do not abide by all Heidegger concludes. I use Heidegger and the rest to keep my thoughts structured and competent, well guided. In the end there is still me and the world and this utterly profound mystery. Heidegger would say, mystery? Absolutely, this mystery, anxiety of being thrown into a world; something is wrong here. He is inspired by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche regarding some grandeur that is lost to us. N thought we are too much degraded by resentment while K thought we are alienated from God. Both thought that there needs to be a cure for this socially constructed alienation, which H defines as "das man", everydayness caught up in the unconscious involvement. Interesting: Buddhists and Hindus (sans the metaphysics) say the same thing. What ails us is this engagement day to day, from which we need to be liberated. What we REALLY are is something else, something better, extraordinary, transcendental (Buddhists differ, as perhaps you know. Mahayana Buddhism is filled with speculative content).

So - you make an ontological state of affairs assumption that there is a world which exists independently of your experience of it. Experience is therefore, amongst other things, a form of representation of that world.

If you want to talk like that, but it would be a retreat from what phenomenology is trying to do. Husserl, e.g., is NOT like Kant: there is a world of "unknown X" that we cannot experience. Same with Heidegger. Just take it as it presents itself; what it is. Here is a candle. The candle, says Husserl, has its basic analysis in terms of an eidetic predicatively formed affair. This IS like Kant saying concepts without intuitions are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind. The object IS the conceptual/intuitive (sensorily) construction and this is just a descriptive account. There are assumptions of what the things is, but without the conceptual/predicative end of this, without the eidetic dimension, you are not describing what the thing is. What appears before IS idea and intuition, of-a-piece. You can separate them only in the abstract. Talk about sensory intuition as such is nonsense; you are, after all, IN eidetic contexts, or you are simply not thinking at all.

Now, if you have an interest as I do, you might side with Husserl over Heidegger: Husserl believed that in what he calls the phenomenological reduction, a suspension of imposing interpretative thought that is always already there when you open your eyes in the morning, this sort of thing takes a quasi mystical turn: it is the suspension of all ready assumptions, presuppositions that are already in place, what Heidegger later calls "proximal" thinking, as in, the basic furniture of our lived affairs of grocery shopping and quantum physics (to the extent these apply. Deep forested tribes untouched by modernity hardly go shopping in our sense of the term). It is, I think, what a meditating yogic does with great rigor. Husserl says that if you do this, often, it creates a distance between you and, ala Heidegger, *Being-in-the-world*, and HERE, there is a possible religious ...errr, encountering the world of novel insight. See, if you have a mind, Anthony Steinbach's *Phenomenology and Mysticism*. Also see *Phenomenology and Religion, New Frontiers*, an anthology of post Heidegerian thought.

I have these texts pdf if you want them.

A world which you share with other people, and compare notes about. And hence we have the inter-subjective basis of a working model of the world we share. A world where there are independently existing things and processes. We can't know about these other things and people from a first-hand pov, but we can agree on limited and flawed descriptions based in our shared observations and reasoning. And we end up with a (flawed and incomplete) scientific, materialist working model of the world.

Agree so far?

Absolutely.

That model contains an evolutionary explanation of why we are the way we are, physically, and why we have certain types of experience. A limited, flawed explanation, which doesn't explain the source of experience (but then neither does phenomenology?). But does give a broad utility-based explanation for things like our caring, social pre-dispositions, our competitive and tribal instincts, why we like chocolate and so on.

Absolutely.

So what is your problem with that approach to human nature? Where do you draw the line on explanations which arise in the world we share, and why? Presumably you accept what we call gravity tells us something real about the world, and you accept evolution tells us something real about why our bodies are the way they are - so why draw the line at what evolution tells us about why we are the way we are mentally?

Simple. Empirical scientific thinking is NOT foundational ontology. That "what is" of the world at the level of basic assumptions is not addressed at all. Even if you have an a sound empirical theory about the nature of conscious thought, a neurologist's or a psychologist's, you are still not examining the nature of thought itself. A first step in this direction sees with perfect clarity that such an examination presupposes thought IN the empirical examination. This clear insight is at the heart of a LOT of philosophy. Thought examining thought is, by nature, impossible (Wittgenstein) for you would need yet another systematic symbolic pov/standard to stand apart from the thought perspective that is doing the examining; and this would yet require another to examine it! An infinite regress.

Heidegger sees exactly this, and responds: hermeneutics! Circularity IS what IS at the level of basic assumptions. He is right about this. He has opened the door, however, to possibilities, interpretative possibilities, and this is why I value his philosophy: the world is OPEN at the very foundation of meaning making itself. Scientific paradigms are in abeyance, as are all, even that of phenomenology.

Now I can anticipate your objection: This is exactly what science IS, a theoretical openness, founding paradigms questioned, revolutions in the structure of science itself, and so on. Heidegger says YES! the method of phenomenology is not at all a repudiation of science. But it is not working with THOSE paradigms. It works apriori, what is presupposed by empirical paradigms. It is another

order of thought entirely, embracing science, religion, sociology, anthropology, and all the rest under one single paradigm, that of hermeneutics.

In order to see the importance of this, one has to work through the literature.

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CHAPTER 1.149.

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Hereandnow on 🕒 Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 4:05 PM



Terrapin Station

"What it means to be here," on my view, is a rather juvenile/pre-analytical-to-nonsensical question. There is no general/universal "meaning" or "purpose" in that sense. Meaning/purpose only exist insofar as an individual thinks about anything in that way. This should be obvious with even the slightest philosophical or scientific exploration of the world.

Then you would not be on Kierkegaard, Buber, Levinas, and others' Xmas list. The obviousness of it, though, is forwarded without examination. I once thought it nonsense as well. But I then read with a desire to understand what they were about, not with prejudice, but with openness. If you go into philosophical matters without openness, you are bound to orthodoxy, dogma, the opposite of philosophy.

I do understand the unwillingness to be open to counterintuitive thinking. But you have to be careful not to end up like that Tea Party lunatic Paul Collins Broun a who said, "evolution and embryology and the Big Bang Theory, all that is lies straight from the pit of Hell." I ask, what IS this man's problem? Part of the answer is simple: he refuses to read with an open mind about the things he so passionately attacks.

If the puzzle is "what it means to be here," then the puzzle is due to a misunderstanding of what things like meaning, purpose, etc. are.

Religion on my view is something that we'll be far better off without, once we can get enough people to see how absolutely silly it is, and ethics is something we do best with once we realize that it's simple ways that people (as individuals, influenced by their cultures) feel/dispositions they have towards interpersonal behavior.

On religion, absolutely! That is, public religions and their idiotic beliefs that cause otherwise sane people to spend their lives trying to make the world conform to the bible, or the koran, or whatever other foolishness. Such religious devotion annihilates any progressive ethical interpretation of the world.

But then there is the existential analysis of human religiosity. An entirely different matter. I would say, pls be careful swinging that bat on this matter, lest you end up like Paul Broun.

As to ethics, this is a thorny issue. to me, our feelings, dispositions beg the question: Feelings about what? Disposition about what? I could be from a culture where belief entanglement includes a confidence that after 50, people should simply walk away, off into the forest to die. This confidence is underwritten by a religion that guarantees the soul's redemption. From another perspective, this rationalizes a kind of systematic homicide (the way caste systems in India have traditionally rationalized treating the Dalit so badly, picking up the Brahmin's feces, e.g.) But all of this leaves out the "given" of ethics, which is the metaethical. If this term makes no sense to you, I refer you to Moores Principia Ethica; see his "non natural property"; also see Mackie's Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong; then Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics. These are the three I choose to make my case.

To talk about this without you reading these, at least, would be me throwing out the unfamiliar again and you understandably don't appreciate this.

Meaning and concepts are something that individuals do. They're not something that exists independently of anyone. So the sentence above reflects a serious misunderstanding of these things that's going to lead to a lot of errors in one's philosophizing.

But you are in Heidegger's world in saying this. Cows and corn fields exist independently of me, they are "not me" in the world. If one wants to understand Being, what IS, one has to take such a thing as "what is the case" as true propositionally, and propositions are expressions in and of language, and are, again, something people DO. Heidegger says this DOING (leaning way back to Heraclitus) has an analytic! To say, X is a physical thing, and this is foundational, is not to say, X is has a nature of DOING built into its ontology. To say such a thing is entirely a different ontology.

Welcome to Heidegger's Being-in-the-World!

CHAPTER 1.150.

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Atla on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 4:44 PM

Guess science won this round by a landslide..

CHAPTER 1.151.

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Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 5:12 PM



Then you would not be on Kierkegaard, Buber, Levinas, and others' Xmas list. The obviousness of it, though, is forwarded without examination. I once thought it nonsense as well. But I then read with a desire to understand what they were about, not with prejudice, but with openness. If you go into philosophical matters without openness, you are bound to orthodoxy, dogma, the opposite of philosophy.

I do understand the unwillingness to be open to counterintuitive thinking. But you have to be careful not to end up like that Tea Party lunatic Paul Collins Broun a who said, "evolution and embryology and the Big Bang Theory, all that is lies straight from the pit of Hell." I ask, what IS this man's problem? Part of the answer is simple: he refuses to read with an open mind about the things he so passionately attacks.

Here's the way I'm open to it: show any good reason to believe that meaning/purpose in the relevant sense could occur outside of something we do, in the sense of a way that we think about things. Show any good reason to believe that meaning/purpose exist external to us (or that any real abstract exists -- that is, any abstract as an existent external to us/to a way that we, as individuals, think).

As to ethics, this is a thorny issue. to me, our feelings, dispositions beg the question: Feelings about what? Disposition about what?

Again, about interpersonal behavior that we consider to be more significant than etiquette. In other words, how humans behave towards each other, the actions they take towards each other, etc.

I could be from a culture where belief entanglement includes a confidence that after 50, people should simply walk away, off into the forest to die. This confidence is underwritten by a religion that guarantees the soul's redemption. From another perspective, this rationalizes a kind of systematic homicide (the way caste systems in India have traditionally rationalized treating the Dalit so badly, picking up the Brahmin's feces, e.g.) But all of this leaves out the "given" of ethics, which is the metaethical. If this term makes no sense to you, I refer you to Moores Principia Ethica; see his "non natural property"; also see Mackie's Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong; then Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics. These are the three I choose to make my case.

Moral stances are subjective. They can vary not only from culture to culture but from individual to individual. There are no (objectively) correct or incorrect, true or false, etc. moral stances. Moral stances are ways that people feel about behavior -- whether they feel that it's acceptable behavior to engage in systemic homicide, etc. There are no correct/incorrect answers there. There are just different ways that different people feel about such things.

To talk about this without you reading these, at least, would be me throwing out the unfamiliar again and you understandably don't appreciate this.

I've read all of that stuff. I've read Heidegger, too, for that matter. I just don't have a very positive opinion of Heidegger. I have an extensive academic background in philosophy, and I even taught a bit.

I've read through most of this thread, but the following couple of paragraphs raise most of the points for which I have questions/comments (I also tried to read Husserl decades ago, and dismissed it at the time as fatuous gibberish).

1.148. by *Hereandnow*

If you want to talk like that, but it would be a retreat from what phenomenology is trying to do.

What phenomenology is trying to do, as far as I can see, is discover and characterize the *ding an sich*, Kant's *noumena*, which he argues (convincingly, to my mind) is impossible. Is that a fair characterization of the aim of phenomenology? If it is, then phenomenology is a fool's errand.

Husserl, e.g., is NOT like Kant: there is a world of "unknown X" that we cannot experience.

Not clear there whether you're attributing that view to Kant or Husserl, but that is precisely Kant's claim . . . correction --- Kant does not CLAIM there is an external world forever out of our reach, but that there is one is an assumption we can't do without.

Same with Heidegger. Just take it as it presents itself; what it is. Here is a candle. The candle, says Husserl, has its basic analysis in terms of an eidetic predicatively formed affair. This IS like Kant saying concepts without intuitions are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind. The object IS the conceptual/intuitive (sensorily) construction and this is just a descriptive account. There are assumptions of what the things is, but without the conceptual/predicative end of this, without the eidetic dimension, you are not describing what the thing is. What appears before IS idea and intuition, of-a-piece. You can separate them only in the abstract. Talk about sensory intuition as such is nonsense; you are, after all, IN eidetic contexts, or you are simply not thinking at all.

Are you using "intuitions" in Kant's sense? Here is a decent summary of that sense:

[http://www.askphilosophers.org/question ... perception](http://www.askphilosophers.org/question...perception)).

What you are calling an eidetic perception or dimension looks to me to be identical with Kant's sensory intuitions. If you see some difference, can you articulate it? When those intuitions are combined with concepts (the "unity of apperception") we know as much about the thing before us as we will ever know. Asking what the thing "really" is, which assumes that there is something more to be learned or understood about the thing is an idle question, the fool's errand mentioned above.

Now, if you have an interest as I do, you might side with Husserl over Heidegger: Husserl believed that in what he calls the phenomenological reduction, a suspension of imposing interpretative thought that is always already there when you open your eyes in the morning, this sort of thing takes a quasi mystical turn: it is the suspension of all ready assumptions, presuppositions that are already in place . . .

A mystical turn indeed. There can be no suspension "of all ready assumptions." You may be able to recognize and suspend some particular assumption, but only by relying upon other assumptions. The only way to suspend all assumptions is to lapse into unconsciousness, or die. Typically those alternative assumptions involve some sort of non-cognitive mysticism.

Simple. Empirical scientific thinking is NOT foundational ontology. That "what is" of the world at the level of basic assumptions is not addressed at all.


It is addressed to the extent that it is rationally, cogently, testably addressible. A proffered ontology which does not rest on empirical evidence and testable theories is mysticism, with no explanatory power or practical application.

Even if you have an a sound empirical theory about the nature of conscious thought, a neurologist's or a psychologist's, you are still not examining the nature of thought itself. A first step in this direction sees with perfect clarity that such an examination presupposes thought IN the empirical examination. This clear insight is at the heart of a LOT of philosophy. Thought examining thought is, by nature, impossible (Wittgenstein) for you would need yet another systematic symbolic pov/standard to stand apart from the thought perspective that is doing the examining; and this would yet require another to examine it! An infinite regress.

I agree. But you don't seem to appreciate the implications of that, i.e., that those empirical observations and theories about thought are *the best we can ever do*. (Which does not rule out replacing current theory with a better one).

CHAPTER 1.153.

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Hereandnow on  Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 9:54 PM



GE Morton wrote

What phenomenology is trying to do, as far as I can see, is discover and characterize the ding an sich, Kant's noumena, which he argues (convincingly, to my mind) is impossible. Is that a fair characterization of the aim of phenomenology? If it is, then phenomenology is a fool's errand.

This comment, and what follows in your response, is, by my thinking, the most interesting there is in philosophy. Husserl wanted little to do with Kant's noumena. His "thing itself" is not Kant's "thing in itself." This latter is strictly prohibited for meaningful thought...yet he thinks about it because he feels he simply has to say something. It's out of time and space (our intuition of these) and no sense can be made, lest one fall into a dialectic illusion. No, Husserl is not about this. He is about the presence before one when one does the phenomenological reduction. The "thing itself" rises before one out once what is truly there is distilled out of the clutter of knowledge claims. To "observe" the world phenomenologically, one encounters what is there, REALLY there, apart from the divergent and presuppositions that would otherwise own it.

Phenomenology is a broad field of divergent thought itself, regardless of Husserl's claim. There is a long list of thinking and I certainly have not read them all. I like Levinas, Henry, Blanchot, Nancy; I like the French. I like Derrida, too, given the little I've read. I like him because he takes Heidegger to a radical and logical conclusion. Heidegger rejects Husserl's strong claim (a great book on just this is Caputo's Radical Hermeneutics) claiming the latter is like walking on water in the interpretative settledness, and Husserl ends up defeating himself": for it is he who talks on about how laden phenomena are with eidetic content, and, as you say, there is no way out of this to make any claim about the Real beyond idea.

There is another paper that defends Husserl: Husserl's thing itself is not meant as an absolute, but is just a measure of what belongs to the object as an object rather than extraneous theory. I'd have to look for it.

As to a fool's errand, not sure why. Philosophy is what it is.

Not clear there whether you're attributing that view to Kant or Husserl, but that is precisely Kant's claim . . . correction --- Kant does not CLAIM there is an external world forever out of our reach, but that there is one is an assumption we can't do without.

Phenomenologists are all post Kantians in that they take very seriously the idea that thought and intuitions (very difficult to say, but intuitions in my thinking are what ever an analysis yields when the eidetic part is removed. to me, this is a challenging part of the distinctions between phenomenologists themselves. But this is for another discussion) constitute an object, whether it is talk about intentionality or totality (Levinas) or presence at hand (Heidegger) or pragmatics (Dewey, Rorty, close to Heidegger, I think, on this. BUT: Rorty is explicitly NOT a phenomenologist, because he refutes it in *The Mirror of Nature*. On the other hand, his is clearly in Wittgenstein and Heidegger's world).

As to the external world, noumena, there is a lot about this regarding his idealism and the way he was taken up in subsequent philosophy. They say, those that went the way of phenomenology emphasized the ideality of things; and those who went to analytic philosophy emphasized the prohibition on meaningful talk beyond empirical (and analytic? there is that paper by Quine, the *Two Dogmas* that attacks the distinction. I'd have to read it again).

Of course, read the *Transcendental Dialectic* and it is plain to see the explicit prohibition on such talk. Externality of this kind is nonsense. Again, on the other hand, there are those who say this is misleading: really briefly: this world is existentially imbued with transcendence. As with all ideas, we certainly DID invent the language to conceive it, but prior to language's hold or reduction to language, it has a "presence" that is not invented. This kind of thinking is behind a lot of objections to the attempt to confine meaningful talk to science and empiricism.

What you are calling an eidetic perception or dimension looks to me to be identical with Kant's sensory intuitions. If you see some difference, can you articulate it? When those intuitions are combined with concepts (the "unity of apperception") we know as much about the thing before us as we will ever know. Asking what the thing "really" is, which assumes that there is something more to be learned or understood about the thing is an idle question, the fool's errand mentioned above.

It's not me, of course, but Husserl, paraphrased from his *Ideas I*. to see the difference between, say Husserl and Kant, you would have to look at his lengthy dissertation on noesis, noema, hyle, the eidetic reduction; I have a paper, *Husserl's Reductions and the Role They Play in His Phenomenology* by DAGFINN FØLLESDA, which lays this out with clarity that helps with *Ideas*. But you read *Ideas I* and you see clear as day, this is Kant behind this. Obviously. And if you read Heidegger or Sartre you see clear as day, this is Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety!* They are ALL connected.

But the fool's errand? Is *Being and Time* a fool's errand? Was Kant's *Critique*? Or Levinas' *Totality*

and Infinity? You could say yes, but then, we would have a lot to talk about.

But to speak generally, it is one of the most extraordinary insights one can have, when the structure of experience is laid bare, and one takes the matter as far as one can (see Fink's Sixth Cartesian Meditation), to see that there is no foundation to our Being-in-the-world of the kind so sought after and frankly assumed. This taking the rug out from under basic assumptions OPENS assumptive space foundationally. The familiar idea of science and its authority presiding over the basic meaning of all things becomes undone, if one has the mentality to see it.

A mystical turn indeed. There can be no suspension "of all ready assumptions." You may be able to recognize and suspend some particular assumption, but only by relying upon other assumptions. The only way to suspend all assumptions is to lapse into unconsciousness, or die. Typically those alternative assumptions involve some sort of non-cognitive mysticism.

That IS the issue! The charge against Husserl has been that there is no innocent eye (this belongs to Goodman, the myth of the innocent eye), and it's all interpretation. In the ever deferential world of Derrida, wandering through Kafka's Castle is the best it ever gets! Kant said as much in his account of imagination in the Transcendental Deduction, Husserl said in his Ideas (see specifically his predelineation in the analysis of intentionality) and elsewhere (he thereby defeats himself, says Derrida). Of course, Heidegger is all over this.

But then there is Kierkegaard and his progeny. This takes a special focus on rather abstruse thinking. I will only explore it if you're interested.

It is addressed to the extent that it is rationally, cogently, testably addressible. A proffered ontology which does not rest on empirical evidence and testable theories is mysticism, with no explanatory power or practical application.

Philosophy is apriori analysis, no explanatory power begs the question, cogency certainly applies to phenomenology without question, "testable" begs the question (Consider that thought itself is in the operation of thinking nothing short of testable theories about the world confirmed or denied). Kant was not an empirical theorist at all. He acknowledge thought, judgment, analyzed these for their structure in form, logic, apriority. All of what he said was apriori analysis: taking what is given and looking to what is presupposed by it, what must be the case given that we have experiences of such and such kind. Heidegger the same.

I agree. But you don't seem to appreciate the implications of that, i.e., that those empirical observations and theories about thought are the best we can ever do. (Which does not rule out replacing current theory with a better one).

No, not EMPIRICAL observations and theories. The matter goes to how we conceive of a human being at the most basic level. This is NOT empirical science, for as Heidegger and others have shown us, empirical thought is just one part of human dasein, and a foundational account is to be about all there is in the horizon of experience; **empirical science is actually a minor part of this**, a useful part, like tying my shoes properly, though often on a larger scale. What steps forward is not Wittgensteinian facts or states of affairs at all! It is the *affect* of your existence, the caring, the meaning the ethics/metaethics, value/metavalue matters, the dramatic unfolding of human tragedies and blisses. Logic, Wittgenstein told us in the Tractatus, is the framework of thought. As facts, the world possesses nothing at all of the ethical, the aesthetic. One needs to look very closely

at this: what is there in the facts, empirical or otherwise that makes them at all important? Nothing. to take empirical science as a foundational view is patently absurd. Our Being here is a factual presence in that it can be put into propositional form, truth value assigned. *But just because propositional form encompasses all knowledge possibilities, it does not thereby reduce us to that.* This is the rationalist's fallacy.

CHAPTER 1.154.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 2:57 AM

1.151. by Terrapin Station

Moral stances are subjective. They can vary not only from culture to culture but from individual to individual.

Yes indeed. Vernacular moralities are, for the most part, indeed expressions of feelings and dispositions --- largely culturally induced --- are idiosyncratic and subjective.

There are no (objectively) correct or incorrect, true or false, etc. moral stances.

Well, that is a *non sequitur*, and false. 1000 years ago everyone's beliefs about the structure of the universe, the causes of diseases, the origins of species, etc., were similarly idiosyncratic, culturally conditioned, and subjective. But it wasn't true then that there were no objectively correct explanations for those phenomena, and it isn't true now of morality.

Moral stances are ways that people feel about behavior--whether they feel that it's acceptable behavior to engage in systemic homicide, etc. There are no correct/incorrect answers there. There are just different ways that different people feel about such things.

There are certainly different ways people feel about things. But how people feel has nothing to do with whether a moral theory, principle, or judgment is sound and rationally defensible, any more than feelings have anything to do with the soundness of the theory of relativity.

CHAPTER 1.155.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 3:04 AM

1.154. by GE Morton

But it wasn't true then that there were no objectively correct explanations for those phenomena, and it isn't true now of morality.



Explanations aren't the issue. There are no mind-independent moral principles, stances, etc.

There are certainly different ways people feel about things. But how people feel has nothing to do with whether a moral theory, principle, or judgment is sound

They can't be sound in the standard logical sense because moral premises can't be true.

and rationally defensible

That's simply a matter of mind-dependent persuasion, due to sharing dispositions, etc.

CHAPTER 1.156.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 8:08 AM

1.153. by 🌿 Hereandnow

The familiar idea of science and its authority presiding over the basic meaning of all things becomes undone, if one has the mentality to see it.

Don't you mean that back in the early 20th century, the mechanistic, dead, clockwork universe, which was supposed to be observer-independent in every conceivable way, was the only worldview that was to be taken seriously!

Because almost no one takes the above picture too seriously anymore, some of it was refuted by science itself, and there was a big retreat towards mere instrumentalism. Maybe that's why I don't understand your critique.

CHAPTER 1.157.

~

Tecolote on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 11:52 AM

Hello,

First post here, after taking a few moments to skim this thread. I recently saw a picture which showed an interesting juxtaposition of past scientific thinkers and (famous) recent ones. I realize that these are cherry-picked, but it could make for an interesting start on the historiography of philosophy in science.

Anecdotally speaking, I worked a trade job for a few years in which I was able to listen to audiobooks all day. I discovered LibriVox, a site where volunteers read public domain books and upload their readings as MP3s which can be downloaded for free. Writing styles change over decades and centuries, but, after having listened to so many public domain books (as well as reading quite a few), I'm absolutely convinced that historians, philosophers, and theologians of the past were much deeper thinkers than those of today, with the most precipitous decline in deep thought depth coming after WWII.

Anyway, I decided to post the quotes in the picture I mentioned because posting the picture seemed, somehow, gauche. Here they are:

Past:

Heisenberg

I think that modern physics has definitely decided in favor of Plato. In fact the smallest units of matter are not physical objects in the ordinary sense; they are forms, ideas which can be expressed unambiguously only in mathematical language.

“My mind was formed by studying philosophy, Plato and that sort of thing.”

Einstein

I fully agree with you about the significance and educational value of methodology as well as history and philosophy of science. So many people today, and even professional scientists, seem to me like someone who has seen thousands of trees but has never seen a forest. A knowledge of the historic and philosophical background gives that kind of independence from prejudices of his generation from which most scientists are suffering. This independence created by philosophical insights is, in my opinion, the mark of distinction between a mere artisan or specialist and a real seeker after truth

Schrödinger

The plurality that we perceive is only an appearance; it is not real. Vedantic philosophy... has sought to clarify it by a number of analogies, one of the most attractive being the many-faceted crystal which, while showing hundreds of little pictures of what is in reality a single existent object, does not really multiply that object.

Bohr

I consider those developments in physics during the last decades which have shown how problematical such concepts as objective and subjective are, a great liberation of thought.

There is no quantum world. There is only an abstract quantum physical description. It is wrong to think that the task of physics is to find out how nature is. Physics concerns what we can say about Nature.

Modern

Dawkins

“I mean it as a compliment when I say that you could almost define a philosopher as someone who won't take common sense for an answer.”

'By all means let's be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains drop out.'

Lawrence Krauss

Philosophy is a field that, unfortunately, reminds me of that old Woody Allen joke, 'those that can't do, teach, and those that can't teach, teach gym.' And the worst part of philosophy is the philosophy of science; the only people, as far as I can tell, that read work by philosophers of science are the other philosophers of science. It has no impact on physics what so ever. They have every right to feel threatened, because science progresses and philosophy doesn't.

Bill Nye

The idea that reality is not real, or that what you sense and feel is not authentic... is something I'm very skeptical of"

Neil Degrasse Tyson

(Philosophy) can really mess you up.

My concern here is that the philosophers believe they are actually asking deep questions about nature. And to the scientist it's, what are you doing? Why are you concerning yourself with the meaning of meaning?

CHAPTER 1.158.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 12:30 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.153. by 🌿 Hereandnow

The familiar idea of science and its authority presiding over the basic meaning of all things becomes undone, if one has the mentality to see it.

There is nothing to be "undone" as no serious thinker has ever, in the entire history of Western philosophy, claimed that science presides over the basic meaning of all things.

Your entire thread is based upon an absurd straw man.

CHAPTER 1.159.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 1:10 PM

HAN

Thanks for clarifying some areas of agreement in your reply. We can put those basics aside now, and hopefully you'll continue bear with me as I plod through this.

So what is your problem with that approach to human nature? Where do you draw the line on explanations which arise in the world we share, and why? Presumably you accept what we call gravity tells us something real about the world, and you accept evolution tells us something real about why our bodies are the way they are – so why draw the line at what evolution tells us about why we are the way we are mentally?

Simple. Empirical scientific thinking is NOT foundational ontology... Even if you have an a sound empirical theory about the nature of conscious thought, a neurologist's or a psychologist's, you are still not examining the nature of thought itself.

Well we can describe the "nature of conscious thought" itself in different ways. Lets go through some.

I agree scientific materialism doesn't explain the existence of phenomenal experience, but neither does phenomenology.

Scientific materialism doesn't describe what the "stuff of phenomenal experience" is. Does phenomenology?

Scientific materialism doesn't describe Laws of phenomenal experience. Does phenomenology?

Scientific materialism doesn't explain Agency. Does phenomenology?

Scientific materialism doesn't explain what makes the experience of seeing red, different to seeing blue, or remembering or imagining red, or thinking about red with our internal narrative voice. Nor the differences of the other types of sensory perceptions, different types of sensations, emotions, etc. Does phenomenology?

Scientific materialism notes a correlation between experiential states and certain physical processes ('the neural correlatr of consciousness'), but can't explain the mind-body relationship. Does phenomenology?

Are there other things the methodology of phenomenology tells us which scientific materialism doesn't?

That "what is" of the world at the level of basic assumptions is not addressed at all.

The material "what is" of the world we are located within is addressed in incredible detail by science, based on the assumption that a world exists independently of humans experiencing it, which we can roughly know things about via our experience of it. However it's a model which is

limited and flawed, because we are limited and flawed. We don't have a perfect god's-eye view, we have an evolved-for-utility first person pov, and can only compare notes with each other. The same problem applies to phenomenology.

The 'what is' of phenomenal experience is addressed in one aspect - by evolution. This gives us a story about the utility basis of human phenomenal experience developing in the way it has. Why we care about ourselves, and find evolutionarily useful behaviours pleasant, and dangerous/harmful behaviours unpleasant. Why as a social species we care about others (the foundation of morality). Why we create useful models of our self and the world - in order to navigate the world safely and achieve goals, remember past experiences and predict consequences, etc. It can even explain some of our flaws and limitations in observing, reasoning and predicting. That's a bloody impressive account of human experience imo.

What does phenomenology offer which undermines this approach in your opinion?

And what does phenomenology add?

A first step in this direction sees with perfect clarity that such an examination presupposes thought IN the empirical examination. This clear insight is at the heart of a LOT of philosophy. Thought examining thought is, by nature, impossible (Wittgenstein) for you would need yet another systematic symbolic pov/standard to stand apart from the thought perspective that is doing the examining; and this would yet require another to examine it! An infinite regress.

Heidegger sees exactly this, and responds: hermeneutics! Circularity IS what IS at the level of basic assumptions. He is right about this. He has opened the door, however, to possibilities, interpretative possibilities, and this is why I value his philosophy: the world is OPEN at the very foundation of meaning making itself. Scientific paradigms are in abeyance, as are all, even that of phenomenology.

Now I can anticipate your objection: This is exactly what science IS, a theoretical openness, founding paradigms questioned, revolutions in the structure of science itself, and so on. Heidegger says YES! the method of phenomenology is not at all a repudiation of science. But it is not working with THOSE paradigms. It works apriori, what is presupposed by empirical paradigms. It is another order of thought entirely, embracing science, religion, sociology, anthropology, and all the rest under one single paradigm, that of hermeneutics.

What are you saying here which goes beyond acknowledging that we are flawed and limited observers and reasoners who can only create models congruent with our capabilities, of whatever lies beyond our own directly known experience?

CHAPTER 1.160.

~

Faustus5 wrote

There is nothing to be "undone" as no serious thinker has ever, in the entire history of Western philosophy, claimed that science presides over the basic meaning of all things.



Your entire thread is based upon an absurd straw man.

I do love those pithy remarks, but the pith is often without reflection.

What is the common sense authority of *what is the case* in modern society? What is the essence of the age of reason, of modernity? What comes to mind generally when a serious question is asked about the nature of all things? What has been the general response to all of my claims here about science and hegemony? Explanations go to evolution, anthropology, sociology; hope goes to medical science, politics and government (political science; and yes, these guys decide our fate).

Are you suggesting science does NOT have hegemony in the present age, not just among philosophers, but circulating in the minds of anyone who has given such matters a second look? No one reads philosophy much, but if you ask the person on the street about a philosophical matter, (and you are not a bible belt or the like) you will find default thinking goes to science. Analytic philosophy IS an implicit endorsement of scientific paradigms to address all questions, and as religion yields more and more to disillusionment, a trend impossible to stop (one reason we see the desperation in current politics on the Christian right: they know their days are numbered)

It is the positivism, the Wittgensteinian (btw, Witt was a huge fan of Kierkegaard, this tells us ...interesting things about the line he draws) and Kantian (reason has insight (Einsicht) only into what it itself produces (hervorbringt) according to its own design (Entwurfe)) drawn line that has led to a resignation to the unintelligibility of anything but empirical science that binds US and British philosophy to science. It is the success of science in our material affairs that establishes its hegemony in culture.

Religion used reign in philosophy and in cultures around the world, but the new god is science. It is where we go for foundational understanding of the world. No straw in this.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 6 1 .

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 1:59 PM



1.160. by Hereandnow

Religion used [to] reign in philosophy and in cultures around the world, but the new god is science. It is where we go for foundational understanding of the world. No straw in this.

No, I see no straw man either. But this (your text, above) is what this topic is concerned with. Not to disparage science, but to observe that our new God is often prayed-to for intervention that the God cannot offer. The New God is not omniscient, oddly enough, but is concerned with only with a subset of what we humans perceive as 'reality'. Sometimes, the New God is misapplied. That's what this topic says, yes?

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 3:07 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).

1.160. by 🌿 Hereandnow

What is the common sense authority of what is the case in modern society?

You know the answer to this question already—just look at what normal, sane people actually do. When they want to know what is the case about a disease, they turn to a medical professional. When they want to know what is the case about their car not running, they go to a car mechanic. When they want to know what is the case about the natural world, they ask an appropriate scientist.

Things are more complicated when it comes to ethical or aesthetic issues, because those by their very nature are not always things about which we can form a consensus and turn to reliable experts. But that's okay. The vast majority of us get by just fine.

1.160. by 🌿 Hereandnow

What comes to mind generally when a serious question is asked about the nature of all things?

There can never be a serious question asked about the “nature of all things” because that question is hopelessly vague to the point of being utterly meaningless. The best response is that there is literally no such thing as the “nature of all things”. Serious questions depend on specificity.

1.160. by 🌿 Hereandnow

Are you suggesting science does NOT have hegemony in the present age, not just among philosophers, but circulating in the minds of anyone who has given such matters a second look?

Science dominates all discourse about the natural world, and this is how it should be. Philosophy stopped having a meaningful contribution to such discourse long before we were born.

I suppose you could say science should and does have something to say about moral or aesthetic issues, but pretty much all philosophers understand that its contributions are very limited there, though of course folks debate about where the borders should be.

My point is that people are smart enough to know when science is the right tool to use to solve or discuss a problem, and when it is inappropriate. There is no problem of science having an unjustified hegemony over issues where it has nothing valid to say. Your entire thread is premised on a made up issue.

By the way, I would never deny that some scientists or philosophers have gone too far in thinking they could apply scientific reasoning or techniques to subjects, or that they have mistakenly denied

that philosophy had something to contribute when in fact it does. We'd have to look at this issue by issue. All I am denying is that there is a widespread problem of people doing this. There is not.

1.160. by  Hereandnow

No one reads philosophy much, but if you ask the person on the street about a philosophical matter, (and you are not a bible belt or the like) you will find default thinking goes to science.

You love keeping things vague, don't you? What specific philosophical questions do you think the average person defaults to science on, when asked? And why would they be wrong, on those specific questions?

1.160. by  Hereandnow

Analytic philosophy IS an implicit endorsement of scientific paradigms to address all questions. . .

You are making things up. No serious, respected thinker in the entire history of Western philosophy has ever claimed something so silly.

1.160. by  Hereandnow

It is the success of science in our material affairs that establishes its hegemony in culture.

And this material success has justifiably lead to science dominating in all the aspects of culture that it ought to dominate. You haven't provided a specific example of any particular issue or subject where its domination is harmful or unjustified.

1.160. by  Hereandnow

Religion used reign in philosophy and in cultures around the world, but the new god is science. It is where we go for foundational understanding of the world. No straw in this.

We turn to science when we want "foundational understanding" of the natural world. There is no sense in which a philosophical exercise conducted from the safety of the armchair is going to provide something deeper than this, though philosophers like to fool themselves into thinking otherwise. That's why no one pays attention to them.

CHAPTER 1.163.

~

GE Morton on  Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 6:03 PM

Husserl wanted little to do with Kant's noumena. His "thing itself" is not Kant's "thing in itself." This latter is strictly prohibited for meaningful thought...yet he thinks about it because he feels he simply has to say something. It's out of time and space (our intuition of these) and no sense can be made, lest one fall into a dialectic illusion. No, Husserl is not about this. He is about the presence before one when one does the phenomenological reduction. The "thing itself" rises before one out once what is truly there is distilled out of the clutter of knowledge claims. To "observe" the world phenomenologically, one encounters what is there, REALLY there, apart from the divergent and presuppositions that would otherwise own it.

Like most idealist (and mystical) ontologists you regularly invoke such phrases as "what is REALLY there," "what is truly there," etc. But offer no criterion or explanation for the adjectives "really" and "truly," or for the basis of the implied distinction between what is "really" there and what merely appears to be there. And certainly no explanation of how you gained knowledge of what is "really" there.

I agree we can set aside ("distill out") some of the conceptual superstructure we have learned to overlay upon what we perceive, i.e., perceive it eidetically (as a neonate would), without understanding it. Or at least imagine that we can. That is Kant's "sensible intuition." But without understanding it is gratuitous, and contrary to common usage, to call that edetic percept "real" or "true." Those percepts, when embedded in the best conceptual framework we're able to devise, is the only "reality" we're ever going to have. Phenomenologists, like mystics, seem to imagine that if they stare at something long enough, "clear their minds" (perhaps with the aid of fasting, sleep deprivation, or LSD) they will perceive some "reality" that has escaped everyone else's notice.

As to the external world, noumena, there is a lot about this regarding his idealism and the way he was taken up in subsequent philosophy. They say, those that went the way of phenomenology emphasized the ideality of things; and those who went to analytic philosophy emphasized the prohibition on meaningful talk beyond empirical (and analytic? there is that paper by Quine, the Two Dogmas that attacks the distinction. I'd have to read it again).

One of Quine's "Two Dogmas" dealt with the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, not between idealism and empiricism (the other dealt with reductionism).

Of course, read the Transcendental Dialectic and it is plain to see the explicit prohibition on such talk. Externality of this kind is nonsense. Again, on the other hand, there are those who say this is misleading: really briefly: this world is existentially imbued with transcendence. As with all ideas, we certainly DID invent the language to conceive it, but prior to language's hold or reduction to language, it has a "presence" that is not invented. This kind of thinking is behind a lot of objections to the attempt to confine meaningful talk to science and empiricism.

That the world has a "presence" we did not invent is itself an epistemological assumption, albeit one that we are forced to make (according to Kant). But the most we can confidently claim is that we did not intentionally, consciously, invent it. There are compelling arguments that that entire "eidetic" world which supplies the foundation for our conceptual understanding of "reality" is an artifact of the structure and functioning of our brains and nervous systems. It is a "virtual model," built of bricks, sticks, glue, and paints concocted by our brains from whole cloth --- from nothing --- of an external "reality" which we must postulate but of which we can never gain any direct knowledge.

But why call this eidetic "presence" "transcendental"? It certainly doesn't transcend us, its authors, any more than a writer's novel transcends him, except in the sense that we, like the novel, postulate an external world behind it all --- that postulate itself being a construct of our own.

But to speak generally, it is one of the most extraordinary insights one can have, when the structure of experience is laid bare, and one takes the matter as far as one can (see Fink's Sixth Cartesian Meditation), to see that there is no foundation to our Being-in-the-world of the kind so sought after and frankly assumed. This taking the rug out from under basic assumptions OPENS assumptive space foundationally. The familiar idea of science and its authority presiding over the basic meaning of all things becomes undone, if one has the mentality to see it.

As Faustus5 recently pointed out here, science doesn't claim to define or explain the meanings "of all things;" but only those things within the realm of common experience about which information can be communicated via objective propositions. It reports what is publicly observable and attempts to explain it, i.e., supply causes for observed effects, via theories with predictive power. If science holds a "hegemony" over those explanations it is only because it is the only methodology known which produces communicable and actionable information. Yes, we can set that methodology aside, apprehend some experiential phenomenon eidetically, and ponder other assumptions. But unless those assumptions generate predictions that are publicly confirmable and actionable they will be vacuous; "mental masturbation."

It is addressed to the extent that it is rationally, cogently, testably addressible. A proffered ontology which does not rest on empirical evidence and testable theories is mysticism, with no explanatory power or practical application.

Philosophy is apriori analysis, no explanatory power begs the question, cogency certainly applies to phenomenology without question, "testable" begs the question (Consider that thought itself is in the operation of thinking nothing short of testable theories about the world confirmed or denied). Kant was not an empirical theorist at all. He acknowledge thought, judgment, analyzed these for their structure in form, logic, apriority. All of what he said was apriori analysis: taking what is given and looking to what is presupposed by it, what must be the case given that we have experiences of such and such kind. Heidegger the same.

Well, we disagree there. Philosophy is not --- or ought not be --- "a priori analysis." Indeed, that term is meaningless. Before you can analyze anything there must be something to analyze; some raw material you're seeking to breakdown and understand. No analysis is possible of the contents of an empty beaker. For epistemology and ontology that raw material is experience, percepts. For Kant what was a priori were some of the tools we use to conduct that analysis, the "categories," which are a priori only in the sense that they are "built-in" to our brains and cannot be ignored or overridden. That is, of course, a theory, that may or may not be the best we can do in explaining our own thought processes.

We can postulate properties of our own thought processes and theorize that we apply them a priori to the analysis of other phenomena. We do, after all, have some direct knowledge of those processes. But we have no direct knowledge of anything presumed to be external to us, and never will. Any properties we predicate of them a priori will be arbitrary, vacuous, and frivolous.

No, not EMPIRICAL observations and theories. The matter goes to how we conceive of a human being at the most basic level. This is NOT empirical science, for as Heidegger and others have shown us, empirical thought is just one part of human dasein, and a foundational account is to be about all there is in the horizon of experience; empirical science is actually a minor part of this, a useful part, like tying my shoes properly, though often on a larger scale.

I'd agree that empirical science is only a part of human experience, but quibble over whether it is a "minor" part. If we measure according to the portions of our waking hours we devote to acting in and upon the empirical world --- the world described by science --- I'd guess it would constitute the dominant part. But a scientific explanation of how and why the sun shines does not purport to be an account of the human dasein, or of the entire "horizon of experience." That criticism is gratuitous.

What steps forward is not Wittgensteinian facts or states of affairs at all! It is the affect of your existence, the caring, the meaning the ethics/metaethics, value/metavalue matters, the dramatic unfolding of human tragedies and blisses.

I agree that all those are important and present many interesting philosophical problems of their own. But why do you have a problem with breaking down distinguishable elements of that complex --- the "horizon of experience" as a whole --- into separate problems that can be analyzed separately? Isn't that the way we approach most complex problems?

CHAPTER 1.164.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 12:18 AM

1.155. by Terrapin Station

Explanations aren't the issue. There are no mind-independent moral principles, stances, etc.

Of course not. No principles, theories, judgments, or propositions are mind-independent, in morality or in physics. They are all constructs of the human brain. That doesn't entail, however, that none of them can be sound, valid, objective, or true.

They can't be sound in the standard logical sense because moral premises can't be true.

A proposition is true if the state of affairs it asserts exists. It is objective if that state of affairs is publicly confirmable. If those conditions are satisfied by a moral premise then it is true.

and rationally defensible

That's simply a matter of mind-dependent persuasion, due to sharing dispositions, etc.

Huh? Are you claiming that "rational" is a subjective matter? An argument is rational if its premises are supported by evidence (or are self-evident) and any conclusions drawn from them follow therefrom. Whether anyone is persuaded by it is irrelevant.



Hereandnow on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 12:51 AM



Terrapin Station wrote

Here's the way I'm open to it: show any good reason to believe that meaning/purpose in the relevant sense could occur outside of something we do, in the sense of a way that we think about things. Show any good reason to believe that meaning/purpose exist external to us (or that any real abstract exists--that is, any abstract as an existent external to us/to a way that we, as individuals, think).

External?? I don't know what you have in mind given all that has been said. Meaning purpose external to us...US? How are you thinking about such things?

Again, about interpersonal behavior that we consider to be more significant than etiquette. In other words, how humans behave towards each other, the actions they take towards each other, etc.

The begged question goes to the matter of the essence of ethics, the metaethical or metavaluative. Ethics is ABOUT our entanglements regarding what. Not facts, for facts are value neutral; even though one can describe a valuative situation, the description possesses nothing of the ethical dimension. Such a thing is beyond speaking, which, I think I noted, Wittgenstein would never talk about it. See his Lecture on Ethics.

Moral stances are subjective. They can vary not only from culture to culture but from individual to individual. There are no (objectively) correct or incorrect, true or false, etc. moral stances. Moral stances are ways that people feel about behavior--whether they feel that it's acceptable behavior to engage in systemic homicide, etc. There are no correct/incorrect answers there. There are just different ways that different people feel about such things.

It is not about the different way we are entangled in the world, which gives rise to differences in attitudes, decision making; it is about what value is independently of these entanglements. In discussions about ethics we usually are asking questions about decision making, and there are the usual suspects, utility and deontology, Mill and Kant, and there are various accounts that attempt to say what such decision making is in its nature. But these look to the subject, as if the affective (valuative) dimension of our experiences were all a matter of taste, and thus infamously unable to pin down. I am a moral realist and I think ethics is really quite simple to pin down. As with reason, one can infer from judgment and the incidentals of judgment, the particular facts of a given case, are dismissed in order to get to what reason is itself. We get Aristotle's substance, quality, quantity and the rest (Kant would refine this latter). For ethics, forget the incidentals as well, the "subjective" facts that confuse talk about ethics, and look exclusively at the ethical qua ethical, that is, the value as such. Here, you find little disagreement as to what is right and wrong, or, disagreement would rest solely with an objective evaluation of value at hand that is in question. Instead of wondering if there is sufficient utility one way or another in a situation of competing obligations, one drops the confusing entanglements to see what it IS that is at risk or in play. It is some joy, some misery, something delicious, perhaps, or something disgusting. Here, we have the, if you will, material grounding of ethics, and it speaks as an aesthesis, *as valuative given logically prior to any ethical situation at all*. Prior because it is presupposed: an absence of this material

grounding, and an absence of ethics altogether.

This, no correct/incorrect answer, you say, and I agree. But it has to be understood that the indeterminacy lies not with the value itself, but with the value-arbitrary entanglements. Hitler enjoyed a good cigar as he signed the order to gas thousands. This context of the good cigar makes us cringe, but: the goodness of the cigar is not effected at all OUT of this context, and it is this material goodness that is the kind of thing ethics is "made of," taken as it is itself.

It is an analysis just like Kant's Critique via a vis reason. this isn't Heidegger at all. But to see ethics in this light, one has to be free of interpretative biases that will try to reduce phenomena to something else. Phenomenology allows the world to be what it is.

Since you have read all that stuff, I can trust you understand the issue and not complain that I am being needlessly obscure.

CHAPTER 1.166.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:06 AM



Atla wrote

Don't you mean that back in the early 20th century, the mechanistic, dead, clockwork universe, which was supposed to be observer-independent in every conceivable way, was the only worldview that was to be taken seriously!

Because almost no one takes the above picture too seriously anymore, some of it was refuted by science itself, and there was a big retreat towards mere instrumentalism. Maybe that's why I don't understand your critique.

No Atla, not that. Although if you mean by clockwork universe you are referring to causality itself, you would have to get past the apriority of the principle of sufficient cause. But no, it is not about any particular science and its standing in contemporary thinking. It is about the standard of establishing a foundation for a philosophical ontology. Read what I wrote elsewhere in these posts, for all I would do here is repeat that. I thought my response to G E Morton was adequate.

CHAPTER 1.167.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:14 AM



Tecolote wrote

My concern here is that the philosophers believe they are actually asking deep questions about nature. And to the scientist it's, what are you doing? Why are you concerning yourself with the meaning of meaning?

This by Neil Degrasse Tyson is exactly to the point here. It is simply not among the prerogatives of empirical science to think like a philosopher. Philosophical thinking is apriori, it's about what is presupposed BY science. Philosophy cares nothing for the mass of Neptune's rings and the planetary physicist cares nothing for the temporal structure of meaning itself.

CHAPTER 1.168.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:22 AM

1.165. by *Hereandnow*

Again, about interpersonal behavior that we consider to be more significant than etiquette. In other words, how humans behave towards each other, the actions they take towards each other, etc. The begged question goes to the matter of the essence of ethics, the metaethical or metavaluative. Ethics is ABOUT our entanglements regarding what. Not facts, for facts are value neutral; even though one can describe a valuative situation, the description possesses nothing of the ethical dimension. Such a thing is beyond speaking, which, I think I noted, Wittgenstein would never talk about it. See his Lecture on Ethics.

Methinks you're confounding deontology (the theory of moral principles and rules), with axiology (the theory of value). But you may be excused, since "ethics" has confounded them regularly throughout the history of philosophy. But they are quite distinct subject matters and should be kept strictly separate. Deontology presumes that moral agents have values, but does not prescribe any. Morality, as TP suggests above, is mainly concerned with principles and rules governing interactions between moral agents in a social setting (a "moral field").

CHAPTER 1.169.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 2:07 AM



Pattern-chaser wrote

No, I see no straw man either. But this (your text, above) is what this topic is concerned with. Not to disparage science, but to observe that our new God is often prayed-to for intervention that the God cannot offer. The New God is not omniscient, oddly enough, but is concerned with only with a subset of what we humans perceive as 'reality'. Sometimes, the New God is misapplied. That's what this topic says, yes?

The God of science? To me, it establishes a false idea about what it means to be human, it misrepresents the matter, puts biases place that divert attention away from a more genuine analysis, closes inquiry where inquiry should flourish. Misapplied you say? Yes.

But I would say science is much better at "intervening" than religion ever was, and without all the bad thinking. It is simply not a proper foundational view.



Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 2:31 AM



GE Morton wrote

Methinks you're confounding deontology (the theory of moral principles and rules), with axiology (the theory of value). But you may be excused, since "ethics" has confounded them regularly throughout the history of philosophy. But they are quite distinct subject matters and should be kept strictly separate. Deontology presumes that moral agents have values, but does not prescribe any. Morality, as TP suggests above, is mainly concerned with principles and rules governing interactions between moral agents in a social setting (a "moral field").

It was a response to TP's *There are no correct/incorrect answers there. There are just different ways that different people feel about such things.*

True, he wasn't referring to the matter of metaethics, or axiomatic ethics if you like. But I did take this kind of thinking as is usually the case, that there is nothing apriori about ethics. I am very sure I was right on this assumption. Not to forget, TP was responding to my explicit reference to a metaethical issue. I had written:

I could be from a culture where belief entanglement includes a confidence that after 50, people should simply walk away, off into the forest to die. This confidence is underwritten by a religion that guarantees the soul's redemption. From another perspective, this rationalizes a kind of systematic homicide (the way caste systems in India have traditionally rationalized treating the Dalit so badly, picking up the Brahmin's feces, e.g.) But all of this leaves out the "given" of ethics, which is the metaethical. If this term makes no sense to you, I refer you to Moores Principia Ethica; see his "non natural property"; also see Mackie's Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong; then Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics. These are the three I choose to make my case.



Atla on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 5:03 AM

Atla wrote

Don't you mean that back in the early 20th century, the mechanistic, dead, clockwork universe, which was supposed to be observer-independent in every conceivable way, was the only worldview that was to be taken seriously!

Because almost no one takes the above picture too seriously anymore, some of it was refuted by science itself, and there was a big retreat towards mere instrumentalism. Maybe that's why I don't understand your critique.

No Atla, not that. Although if you mean by clockwork universe you are referring to causality itself, you would have to get past the apriority of the principle of sufficient cause. But no, it is not about any particular science and its standing in contemporary thinking. It is about the standard of establishing a foundation for a philosophical ontology. Read what I wrote elsewhere in these posts, for all I would do here is repeat that. I though my response to G E Morton was adequate.

But the average person never cared much for foundational ontology, they simply believe what they are told. So they believed very simple things that religion told them + what people in power wanted them to believe. Nowadays people believe in a bit less simple scientific insights + what people in power want them to believe. That's still a huge amount of improvement over religion.

But Western philosophy as a foundational ontology has always been sidelined as mental masturbation, it's a 2400 years old failed experiment. And since Western philosophers still won't let it die, and won't let a genuine natural philosophy emerge in its place, science will continue to be dominant. I'd say it's 'hegemony' is the opposite of absurd.

CHAPTER 1.172.

~

evolution on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 10:12 AM

1.4. by Terrapin Station

I get that what you write must make sense to you, but to me--and not just this post, but your posts in general--it just seems like a long string of nonsequiturs, a bunch of words that don't have much to do with each other.

For example, your first sentence says, "All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will."

And then your second sentence starts off with, "That is"--as if you're going to explain the first sentence in other words, but then what you say is, "even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts," and I don't see what that would have to do with "witnessing human drama." The two things just don't seem to go together. It seems like a wild leap from one thought to a completely different thought.

And then you say, "the actual event is within an 'aesthetic' context," which is even more mystifying, and then you write "i.e., experience," as if there's some connection between "events being within an 'aesthetic' context" and experience in general.

I just don't ever really know what you're on about, but I'm assuming it must make sense to you.

Did it ever occur to you to just ask a CLARIFYING QUESTION?

Or, are you REALLY not that interested in BETTER UNDERSTANDING the "other's" view/s here?

CHAPTER 1.173.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 12:54 PM



1.172. by evolution

1.4. by Terrapin Station

I get that what you write must make sense to you, but to me--and not just this post, but your posts in general--it just seems like a long string of nonsequiturs, a bunch of words that don't have much to do with each other.

For example, your first sentence says, "All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will."

And then your second sentence starts off with, "That is"--as if you're going to explain the first sentence in other words, but then what you say is, "even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts," and I don't see what that would have to do with "witnessing human drama." The two things just don't seem to go together. It seems like a wild leap from one thought to a completely different thought.

And then you say, "the actual event is within an 'aesthetic' context," which is even more mystifying, and then you write "i.e., experience," as if there's some connection between "events being within an 'aesthetic' context" and experience in general.

I just don't ever really know what you're on about, but I'm assuming it must make sense to you.

Did it ever occur to you to just ask a CLARIFYING QUESTION?

Or, are you REALLY not that interested in BETTER UNDERSTANDING the "other's" view/s here?

Aside from the fact that I'm describing that the person's writing usually makes little sense in my opinion, a reasonable response to what I wrote would be to clarify and better flesh out/connect the bits I quoted in light of the criticism.

CHAPTER 1.174.

~

evolution on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:00 PM

1.173. by Terrapin Station

1.172. by evolution

Did it ever occur to you to just ask a CLARIFYING QUESTION?

Or, are you REALLY not that interested in BETTER UNDERSTANDING the "other's" view/s here? Aside from the fact that I'm describing that the person's writing usually makes little sense in my opinion, a reasonable response to what I wrote would be to clarify and better flesh out/connect the bits I quoted in light of the criticism.

If a 'reasonable response' to what you wrote WOULD BE to 'clarify', then what do you think my two CLARIFYING QUESTIONS were EXACTLY, if they were NOT done 'to clarify'?

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:02 PM

1.174. by evolution

1.173. by Terrapin Station

Aside from the fact that I'm describing that the person's writing usually makes little sense in my opinion, a reasonable response to what I wrote would be to clarify and better flesh out/connect the bits I quoted in light of the criticism.

If a 'reasonable response' to what you wrote WOULD BE to 'clarify', then what do you think my two CLARIFYING QUESTIONS were EXACTLY, if they were NOT done 'to clarify'?

The remark wasn't a criticism of your response immediately above. It was an explanation why my remark was fine as is, in light of what you would have preferred my remark to be.

~

Hereandnow on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 1:14 PM

Gertie wrote

I agree scientific materialism doesn't explain the existence of phenomenal experience, but neither does phenomenology.

The meaning of words like this are systematically reassigned, and you would have read what is done with them to see this. The existence of phenomenal experience? Sartre put it, existence precedes essence, which means unlike fence posts and coffee cups, we have choices to be what we are, but notice the painful term "are". In general science, "are" is, in the final analysis, substance or physicality or material, and while in certain quarters there may be distinctions (I don't know of any, and I care not, really) between these terms, they are not given analysis at all as to distinctions in meaning, for they don't really mean anything at all. It's like a a stopping place where meaning runs out and empirical science has to stay within its prerogatives. One does not "observe" substance. One observes phenomena.

Onewya to look at the complaint I am pursuing here is to see this terminus as entirely reconceived. Existence is not a general term for bodies in space and time independent of the perception. The existence of phenomenal experience is divided, if you look to Heidegger. Existential refers to basic ontology, describing the structure of dasein (dasein is his term for human existence), where "existentiell" refers to the existence we make of ourselves in life, a teacher, a husband, a human rights activist and so on. This is our facticity. Facts, on the other hand are, as I understand his term, what science deals with, the moon having a certain mass and the like, predicatively formed actualities, Husserl called them.

You might notice that this kind of thinking puts terms like substance out of the terminal position. What now has this position is hermeneutics, which comes from an "existential" analysis human dasein.

Scientific materialism doesn't describe what the "stuff of phenomenal experience" is. Does phenomenology?

See above. The term "stuff" is, I suspect, a vernacular term equivalent to material substance and the rest, right? Or, does it refer to Heideggerian Being? You see, H's bottom line is what he calls a equiprimordiality: phenomena are not reducible to anything, do not have a revealed foundation; in fact, you could say the foundation is that there is no foundation, **thereby lifting UP to their proper place the irrational dimensions of our existence**; all are equal against a standard of phenomenological ontology. BUT, he thinks some things are more primordial than others (??). For a working out of this contradiction you would have to read more deeply into the texts. Derrida comes along and says Heidegger is in violation of his own equiprimordiality, while Heidegger's issue with Husserl was similar: the Hermeneutic (remember the god Hermes, a messenger of the gods bringing word from beyond) foundation for all knowledge claims does not yield to some "intuition" about being. Hermes is all about circulation within Being-in-the-world. this is a closed system, given what history, culture, personal can contribute, but an open system given the freedom one has standing at the precipice of future possibilities.

Scientific materialism doesn't describe Laws of phenomenal experience. Does phenomenology?

Laws? Ontologically, the term is an historically constructed interpretation is brought to bear on certain contexts of human dasein's being in the world. Language is the house of Being

Scientific materialism doesn't explain Agency. Does phenomenology?

Of course scientific materialism explains Agency. It's just a bad explanation.

This is an actively debated issue. You know, Sartre infamously held that we are an agency of nothingness. He is derivative of Heidegger, who is derivative of Kierkegaard, who believed this was where the soul and God stand in a structure of positing spirit. Heidegger stays close to phenomenological prerogatives: what is there, before me. Me and mine are apperceptive concepts as with all concepts. He does not, though, give any reified designation to the egoic center. there is no transcendental ego for Heidegger, nor is there transcendence, a meaningful reaching beyond language. There is me an mine, the stamp dasein's ownness. He gets this no doubt from Kant Transcendental Unity of Apperception, the "I" that is inherent in what makes experiences mine, not yours.

Scientific materialism doesn't explain what makes the experience of seeing red, different to seeing blue, or remembering or imagining red, or thinking about red with our internal narrative voice. Nor the differences of the other types of sensory perceptions, different types of sensations, emotions, etc. Does phenomenology?

Doesn't it? Science tells us light is disbursed in a spectrum of wavelengths, which are

But as to qualia, the "what it is like to taste a specific apple, this particular apple now," the given,

there is no way out of this: it is hermeneutically conceived. It is particle of language that was born in contexts of historical problem solving. No chicken, no egg; chickens and eggs are the same derivative structured concepts. When we use this term to conceive of a languageless presence, we do so in language. Even Being is such a term, bound to constructed meanings worked out in history.

Scientific materialism notes a correlation between experiential states and certain physical processes ('the neural correlators of consciousness'), but can't explain the mind-body relationship. Does phenomenology?

Phenomenology recognizes such debates, and if they are confined to empirical discussions, wishes them well. Obviously, brains are associated with experience and only a fool would deny it. But mind and body are hermeneutically meaningful only. Someone like Rorty causes a lot of friction in his claim that truth conditions are essentially and without exception pragmatic will say, yes, science rules on this, and he is a monist, a materialist, but beneath such claims is Wittgenstein: such utterances are confined to rational structures of thought and these are never about what is beyond these structures. A very closed system.

Are there other things the methodology of phenomenology tells us which scientific materialism doesn't?

You would have to start reading. For me, it liberates our conception about what it means to be human, for, and this varies among continental philosophers, the irrational parts that have been discounted as that which confounds reason and its categories, discounted in the spirit of clarity of thought, are released from the dogmatic hold science would place on them. Science is factual, reality is not reducible to what is factual. Reality is OPEN, and in this openness, there is a kind of truth that is NOT propositional (though there is no avoiding this in conceiving it), but revelatory.

CHAPTER 1.177.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Friday, September 4, 2020 at 3:31 PM



Faustus5 wrote

You know the answer to this question already—just look at what normal, sane people actually do. When they want to know what is the case about a disease, they turn to a medical professional. When they want to know what is the case about their car not running, they go to a car mechanic. When they want to know what is the case about the natural world, they ask an appropriate scientist.

Things are more complicated when it comes to ethical or aesthetic issues, because those by their very nature are not always things about which we can form a consensus and turn to reliable experts. But that's okay. The vast majority of us get by just fine.

Of course, if you're read anything I wrote, you will see that I agree with every word you say here. I would simply add, if you want to know about a philosophical issue, go to a continental philosopher. You know, I just wrote Gertie a few paragraphs on the way I see things and perhaps you could give it a glance.

The "natural world" is not the issue and I leave that to science entirely.

There can never be a serious question asked about the "nature of all things" because that question is hopelessly vague to the point of being utterly meaningless. The best response is that there is literally no such thing as the "nature of all things". Serious questions depend on specificity.

Ahh, but you are so close. Hopelessly vague? Well, if one's idea of what the final ontology would be issues from a naturalistic view, then will find that vagueness is somehow built into the very conditions observation and problem solving that underlie observations of nature. It is not nature but the business of taking IN nature, that bottom line description of the, if you will, manufacturing plant that produces perceptual possibilities to even have perceptions at all. It is NOT as if this is untouchable analytically. Exactly the opposite is true. the specificity you are looking for lies in Being and Time, And totality and Infinity, and Being and Nothingness, and on and on. Now, you may find these titles off putting, understandably, but so what?

There is a very good reason Rorty thought Heidegger to be one of the three greatest philosophers of the 20th century. They are, in important ways, cut from the same cloth.

Science dominates all discourse about the natural world, and this is how it should be. Philosophy stopped having a meaningful contribution to such discourse long before we were born.

I suppose you could say science should and does have something to say about moral or aesthetic issues, but pretty much all philosophers understand that its contributions are very limited there, though of course folks debate about where the borders should be.

My point is that people are smart enough to know when science is the right tool to use to solve or discuss a problem, and when it is inappropriate. There is no problem of science having an unjustified hegemony over issues where it has nothing valid to say. Your entire thread is premised on a made up issue.

By the way, I would never deny that some scientists or philosophers have gone too far in thinking they could apply scientific reasoning or techniques to subjects, or that they have mistakenly denied that philosophy had something to contribute when in fact it does. We'd have to look at this issue by issue. All I am denying is that there is a widespread problem of people doing this. There is not.

Several things. One is that the natural world is not the issue here, at all, unless, that is, you want to reassign the term "natural". As to ethics, the matter comes down to the essence of ethics, that is, what makes ethics, ethics! this too is analyzable philosophically, apriori. This is THE philosophical issue for me, the way value, the essence, or an essential part of, ethics, is at once, embedded in experience, all experience (I follow Dewey on this, in a limited way) and unavailable for scientific inspection. I am referring to metaethics, metavalue, the irrational part of our being in the world that is the material basis for the meaning in things; not the dictionary meanings, but "value" meaning, the importance of importance, if you will. Or, as Neil DeGrasse Tyson put it, I think disparagingly, the meaning of meaning. This is not Heidegger's interpretative dawin but the "aesthesis" of living and breathing.

Look, the issue I have put on the table is more fundamental than you describe it. This is certainly by no means something that "people" are smart enough about. They are in fact so ignorant about

phenomenological ontology that they don't even know it exists. They've never read or heard of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger. They have been processed through a public education system that provides knowledge in basic sciences and are told implicitly or explicitly that this is what human knowledge IS, and beyond this, there is only religious faith, which is explained by the church which has a long history of really bad metaphysics, which, again, implicitly or explicitly works its way into people's thinking. God the father, son and holy spirit? What IS that? People are thoughtless sheep when it comes to thinking about such things, or anything, for that matter, at the basic level, so please, do not place the validity of a philosophical perspective in the hands of people. The idea is patently absurd.

With regard to the "widespread problem" I am referring to the absence of serious consideration of any talk at all about the foundation of knowledge, the meaning of meaning, and the philosophical issues of phenomenology due to a lack of this alternative in people's basic vocabularies. They don't know, or concern themselves, that there has been a monumental paradigm shift in the process of religion's demise, and where not at all long ago, science was tempered by a implicit religious faith, now there is a rising NOTHING to give the irrational part of our existence interpretative meaning at the level of basic questions. This is overwhelmingly evident in your and other responses in the thread. And analytic philosophy merely encourages this, treating metaethics, metavalues as a curiosity easily dismissable.

Public religions are dangerous things. But this has nothing to do with the existential religiousness as a part of the structure of experience itself. to understand what this means, you would have to read about it. No reading, no understanding. to dismiss it, well, from afar, outside the reading is just perverse. Alas, high schools don't teach phenomenology, they teach physics, not phenomenology. And you think there are no scientific prejudices built into the person on the street's thinking??

You are making things up. No serious, respected thinker in the entire history of Western philosophy has ever claimed something so silly.

You have not read Wittgenstein or Kant. You have not read Rorty. You have not read analytic philosophy if you say this. Scientific models fill these philosophical worlds!! What are they saying? They say, we must confine ourselves in making discoveries about the world to empirical science. Beyond this there is no sense to be made! the philosophy of mind: talk about C fibers firing; epistemology: establishing causal connections between the knower and the known (see Gettier); the philosophy of language: see Quine and radical translation, which has been interpreted by some as behavioristic; Quine was very clear about his devotion to empirical science.

Prove me wrong.

We turn to science when we want "foundational understanding" of the natural world. There is no sense in which a philosophical exercise conducted from the safety of the armchair is going to provide something deeper than this, though philosophers like to fool themselves into thinking otherwise. That's why no one pays attention to them.

Well, clearly YOU don't pay attention to them, read them, that is.

Is that what WE do? Oh, you mean philosophers with the right view, the ones you just said have no

truck with the idea that "Analytic philosophy IS an implicit endorsement of scientific paradigms to address all questions."

????????????????????????????

CHAPTER 1.178.

~

Atla on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 4:34 PM

The more I read about Heidegger, the less I get it. He thinks that philosophy is merely about our individual experience of being and what follows from it, and that's it? By itself, I wouldn't even file that under philosophy.

CHAPTER 1.179.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 5:00 PM



My impression of Heidegger is that it's important to understand that:

- (a) supposedly the first philosophy book he read as a kid, and it had a big impact on him, was Franz Brentano's *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*
- and
- (b) he was a student of Husserl and initially was very strongly influenced by him

I think the Brentano book led to him thinking "I'm going to sort out the 'correct sense of 'being'' once and for all," where he was shooting for something more pragmatic, but he had a very convoluted way of going about that, and his eventual break from Husserl's influence came by way of rejecting what he saw as some of the idealistic implications of Husserl's phenomenological method . . . and then he conflated the two into one project.

CHAPTER 1.180.

~

Faustus5 on  Friday, September 4, 2020 at 7:02 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.177. by  Hereandnow

Well, if one's idea of what the final ontology would be issues from a naturalistic view, then will find that vagueness is somehow built into the very conditions observation and problem solving that underlie observations of nature.

The only “final ontology” I have any respect for or interest in is what we get from physics and cosmology. I deny that there is anything any philosopher can provide that is somehow deeper or more profound.

1.177. by  Hereandnow

Exactly the opposite is true. the specificity you are looking for lies in Being and Time, And totality and Infinity, and Being and Nothingness, and on and on. Now, you may find these titles off putting, understandably, but so what?

I submit to you that no philosophical discourse of any sort that trucks in “Being and Time, totality and infinity, Being and Nothingness” will produce a single thing that is of genuine usefulness to anyone other than people who like to play those kinds of word games and fool themselves into thinking they are actually saying something.

1.177. by  Hereandnow

There is a very good reason Rorty thought Heidegger to be one of the three greatest philosophers of the 20th century. They are, in important ways, cut from the same cloth.

Well I’ll take Rorty over Heidegger any day of the week. At least Rorty didn’t have to invent goofy, esoteric word games to make his points. His philosophy was always grounded in ordinary reality described in plain, understandable language.

1.177. by  Hereandnow

They don't know, or concern themselves, that there has been a monumental paradigm shift in the process of religion's demise, and where not at all long ago, science was tempered by a implicit religious faith, now there is a rising NOTHING to give the irrational part of our existence interpretative meaning at the level of basic questions.

Probably because there is literally no need for it. You’re inventing a problem that just doesn’t exist for the rest of us.

1.177. by  Hereandnow

Alas, high schools don't teach phenomenology, they teach physics, not phenomenology.

And I approve of this. I wouldn’t want high schools teaching a highly questionable and obscure doctrine of philosophy when they could be teach something of value.

1.177. by  Hereandnow

You have not read Wittgenstein or Kant. You have not read Rorty.

Excuse me, cupcake, but Wittgenstein (post-Tractatus, anyway) and Rorty are two of my favorite philosophers. I’ve actually read every book Rorty wrote at least twice (excepting the one or two that were strictly about politics). They have profoundly shaped my views.

1.177. by Hereandnow

Prove me wrong.

Burden of proof is on you: find me any respected Western philosopher who has ever said that science can solve “all questions”.

We both know you never will, so why did you make up something so completely ridiculous?

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 8 1 .

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 1:06 AM

1.175. by Terrapin Station

1.174. by evolution

If a 'reasonable response' to what you wrote WOULD BE to 'clarify', then what do you think my two CLARIFYING QUESTIONS were EXACTLY, if they were NOT done 'to clarify'?

The remark wasn't a criticism of your response immediately above. It was an explanation why my remark was fine as is, in light of what you would have preferred my remark to be.

Okay. But what is 'fine' and what is a 'reasonable response' is relative. Anyone, therefore, could very easily and very simply say that 'a reasonable response' is the EXACT OPPOSITE of what you think is, and the one which you have come up with here.

For example, to some, your response was NOT 'to clarify' at all. And, this would be a VERY 'reasonable' perception, and response, indeed, especially considering what you did ACTUALLY write and say.

Besides this, all I was pointing out was that you NEVER actually asked a clarifying question at all in that post, which can be CLEARLY SEEN. Although you made the remark that you do not ever really know what that person is on about, from my perspective you do not actually WANT TO KNOW. As I have suggested previously that if you really do want to know what another person is on about, then just them some CLARIFYING QUESTION. It really is just that SIMPLE.

To me, you were NOT trying to clarify NOR better flesh out/connect the bits you quoted at all, as evidenced by what you wrote. From my perspective, all you were doing was just expressing your OWN views. Again, I suggest that if you are Truly interested in learning and knowing what another is really 'on about', then just ask them some clarifying questions.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 8 2 .

~



1.181. by evolution

Okay. But what is 'fine' and what is a 'reasonable response' is relative. Anyone, therefore, could very easily and very simply say that 'a reasonable response' is the EXACT OPPOSITE of what you think is, and the one which you have come up with here.

Sure. Whenever we're dealing with subjective stuff someone can have an alternative assessment. Is there a reason we'd need to point out something so obvious?

CHAPTER 1.183.

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 8:42 AM

1.182. by Terrapin Station

1.181. by evolution

Okay. But what is 'fine' and what is a 'reasonable response' is relative. Anyone, therefore, could very easily and very simply say that 'a reasonable response' is the EXACT OPPOSITE of what you think is, and the one which you have come up with here.

Sure. Whenever we're dealing with subjective stuff someone can have an alternative assessment.

Great, this is the first time I have seen you admit this.

Now, when we are dealing with words, which is just about ALL of the time in discussions, will you now OPENLY admit that words, themselves, can have 'an alternative assessment'?

If yes, then great.

But if no, then the exact same issue remains when discussing, with 'you'. That is; you remain BELIEVING that 'your' assessment of words and what they mean is the one and only actual meaning.

1.182. by Terrapin Station

Is there a reason we'd need to point out something so obvious?

Yes. The reason I needed to point out that what you claimed was a "reasonable response" was in fact NOT a 'reasonable claim' to make at all was to highlight the tendency you have to BELIEVE that your OWN assessment of things is the only actual True and Right one.

From my perspective, a Truly 'reasoned' response to what you wrote was: You were NOT trying "to clarify and better flesh out/connect the bits" you quoted, from that person at all.

This can be EVIDENCED and PROVEN by the way you used the words you used, from my perspective of things. That was all.

CHAPTER 1.184.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 8:49 AM



1.183. by evolution

Great, this is the first time I have seen you admit this.

Now, when we are dealing with words, which is just about ALL of the time in discussions, will you now OPENLY admit that words, themselves, can have 'an alternative assessment'?

If yes, then great.

But if no, then the exact same issue remains when discussing, with 'you'. That is; you remain BELIEVING that 'your' assessment of words and what they mean is the one and only actual meaning.

How in the world can you have interacted with me as much as you have, and in general seen my posts as much as you have, while thinking that I'd say anything in the vein of "one and only actual meaning"?

I'm the "meaning (and ethics and aesthetics and truth and on and on) is subjective" guy. How have you not noticed that yet?

1.182. by Terrapin Station

Is there a reason we'd need to point out something so obvious?

Yes. The reason I needed to point out that what you claimed was a "reasonable response" was in fact NOT a 'reasonable claim' to make at all

It is in my view obviously. But such things are subjective. There aren't correct answers. People will give their subjective view. Duh.

CHAPTER 1.185.

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 9:17 AM

1.184. by Terrapin Station

1.183. by evolution

Great, this is the first time I have seen you admit this.

Now, when we are dealing with words, which is just about ALL of the time in discussions, will you now OPENLY admit that words, themselves, can have 'an alternative assessment'?

If yes, then great.

But if no, then the exact same issue remains when discussing, with 'you'. That is; you remain BELIEVING that 'your' assessment of words and what they mean is the one and only actual meaning.

How in the world can you have interacted with me as much as you have, and in general seen my posts as much as you have, while thinking that I'd say anything in the vein of "one and only actual meaning"?

How?

Through the actual words that you use.

For example, your words; **"Yet" would make no sense if the "synonymous with 'eternal'" connotation were being used.** Reveals that you are NOT open to ANY thing, which could make sense.

From your OWN words you have said that the use of the word, "Yet", in the place that it was in, in that scenario, would "make NO sense". Therefore, if it would "make NO sense", to you, then there is absolutely NOTHING I nor ANY one else could say to show you otherwise, correct?

1.184. by Terrapin Station

I'm the "meaning (and ethics and aesthetics and truth and on and on) is subjective" guy. How have you not noticed that yet?

I have seen you say this, but I have not seen you, always, follow through with this.

From my perspective, you appear to quite often say things could NOT make sense, because of the words being used.

Whereas, if you were really an actual "definitions and meanings are Truly subjective, guy", then you would appear far MORE OPEN to, at least, trying to understand and make sense of what others are saying, AND meaning, well from my perspective anyway.

Yes. The reason I needed to point out that what you claimed was a "reasonable response" was in fact NOT a 'reasonable claim' to make at all

It is in my view obviously. But such things are subjective. There aren't correct answers. People will give their subjective view. Duh.

So, when you say things like; **"A reasonable response to what I wrote would be ..."**, then, what you are now suggesting is that what you just referred to as being a 'reasonable response' is in fact NOT an actual 'reasonable response' at all, but just a 'reasonable response', from your SUBJECTIVE view, only?

By the way, you informing others of what a 'reasonable response' IS, in regards to what you have previously written, could be expressed far more pleasantly as, "What I was actually meaning was ...", instead.

SEE, readers do NOT have the ability to look at and see things in your writings, from the 'reasoned' perspective that obviously you are thee only ONE is privy to.

By the way I find all of these diversionary tactics completely unnecessary, especially considering how easy it would have been to just answer Honestly these two very simple and very straightforward OPEN clarifying questions I asked you:

Did it ever occur to you to just ask a CLARIFYING QUESTION?

Or, are you REALLY not that interested in BETTER UNDERSTANDING the "other's" view/s here?

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 8 6 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 11:59 AM

Gertie wrote

I agree scientific materialism doesn't explain the existence of phenomenal experience, but neither does phenomenology.

The meaning of words like this are systematically reassigned, and you would have read what is done with them to see this. The existence of phenomenal experience? Sartre put it, existence precedes essence, which means unlike fence posts and coffee cups, we have choices to be what we are, but notice the painful term "are". In general science, "are" is, in the final analysis, substance or physicality or material, and while in certain quarters there may be distinctions (I don't know of any, and I care not, really) between these terms, they are not given analysis at all as to distinctions in meaning, for they don't really mean anything at all. It's like a a stopping place where meaning runs out and empirical science has to stay within its prerogatives. One does not "observe" substance. One observes phenomena.

Onewya to look at the complaint I am pursuing here is to see this terminus as entirely reconceived. Existence is not a general term for bodies in space and time independent of the perception. The existence of phenomenal experience is divided, if you look to Heidegger. Existential refers to basic ontology, describing the structure of dasein (dasein is his term for human existence), where "existentiell" refers to the existence we make of ourselves in life, a teacher, a husband, a human rights activist and so on. This is our facticity. Facts, on the other hand are, as I understand his term, what science deals with, the moon having a certain mass and the like, predicatively formed actualities, Husserl called them.

You might notice that this kind of thinking puts terms like substance out of the terminal position. What now has this position is hermeneutics, which comes from an "existential" analysis human dasein.

Scientific materialism doesn't describe what the "stuff of phenomenal experience" is. Does phenomenology?

See above. The term "stuff" is, I suspect, a vernacular term equivalent to material substance and the rest, right? Or, does it refer to Heideggerian Being? You see, H's bottom line is what he calls a equiprimordiality: phenomena are not reducible to anything, do not have a revealed foundation; in fact, you could say the foundation is that there is no foundation, **thereby lifting UP to their proper place the irrational dimensions of our existence**; all are equal against a standard of phenomenological ontology. BUT, he thinks some things are more primordial than others (??). For a working out of this contradiction you would have to read more deeply into the texts. Derrida comes along and says Heidegger is in violation of his own equiprimordiality, while Heidegger's issue with Husserl was similar: the Hermeneutic (remember the god Hermes, a messenger of the gods bringing word from beyond) foundation for all knowledge claims does not yield to some "intuition" about being. Hermes is all about circulation within Being-in-the-world. this is a closed system, given what history, culture, personal can contribute, but an open system given the freedom one has standing at the precipice of future possibilities.

Scientific materialism doesn't describe Laws of phenomenal experience. Does phenomenology?

Laws? Ontologically, the term is an historically constructed interpretation is brought to bear on certain contexts of human dasein's being in the world. Language is the house of Being

Scientific materialism doesn't explain Agency. Does phenomenology?

Of course scientific materialism explains Agency. It's just a bad explanation.

This is an actively debated issue. You know, Sartre infamously held that we are an agency of nothingness. He is derivative of Heidegger, who is derivative of Kierkegaard, who believed this was where the soul and God stand in a structure of positing spirit. Heidegger stays close to phenomenological prerogatives: what is there, before me. Me and mine are apperceptive concepts as with all concepts. He does not, though, give any reified designation to the egoic center. there is no transcendental ego for Heidegger, nor is there transcendence, a meaningful reaching beyond language. There is me an mine, the stamp dasein's ownness. He gets this no doubt from Kant Transcendental Unity of Apperception, the "I" that is inherent in what makes experiences mine, not yours.

Scientific materialism doesn't explain what makes the experience of seeing red, different to seeing blue, or remembering or imagining red, or thinking about red with our internal narrative voice. Nor the differences of the other types of sensory perceptions, different types of sensations, emotions, etc. Does phenomenology?

Doesn't it? Science tells us light is disbursed in a spectrum of wavelengths, which are

But as to qualia, the "what it is like to taste a specific apple, this particular apple now," the given, there is no way out of this: it is hermeneutically conceived. It is particle of language that was born in contexts of historical problem solving. No chicken, no egg; chickens and eggs are the same derivative structured concepts. When we use this term to conceive of a languageless presence, we do so in language. Even Being is such a term, bound to constructed meanings worked out in history.

Scientific materialism notes a correlation between experiential states and certain physical processes ('the neural correlatr of consciousness'), but can't explain the mind-body relationship. Does phenomenology?

Phenomenology recognizes such debates, and if they are confined to empirical discussions, wishes them well. Obviously. brains are associated with experience and only a fool would deny it. But mind and body are hermeneutically meaningful only. Someone like Rorty causes a lot of friction in his claim that truth conditions are essentially and without exception pragmatic will say, yes, science rules on this, and he is a monist, a materialist, but beneath such claims is Wittgenstein: such utterances are confined to rational structures of thought and these are never about what is beyond these structures. A very closed system.

Are there other things the methodology of phenomenology tells us which scientific materialism doesn't?

You would have to start reading. For me, it liberates our conception about what it means to be human, for, and this varies among continental philosophers, the irrational parts that have been discounted as that which confounds reason and its categories, discounted in the spirit of clarity of thought, are released from the dogmatic hold science would place on them. Science is factual, reality is not reducible to what is factual. Reality is OPEN, and in this openness, there is a kind of truth that is NOT propositional (though there is no avoiding this in conceiving it), but revelatory.

Would it be fair to characterise phenomenology as the study of what it is like to be a human?

And sees the project of trying to know what anything else is, as inevitably interpretive and therefore dependent on how humans interpret?

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 12:13 PM



1.185. by evolution

How?

Through the actual words that you use . . .

Yikes. That x is subjective doesn't imply that S has no stance or opinion on x. And it doesn't imply that S doesn't very strongly feel however they do on x. You're making the same error that objectivists make in attempting to understand subjectivism, yet you're supposed to be a subjectivist.

if it would "make NO sense", to you, then there is absolutely NOTHING I nor ANY one else could say to show you otherwise, correct?

No, that's not correct. You could explain how it makes sense to you, and I might be convinced that it could make sense. You'd have to do the heavy lifting there, of course.

1.184. by Terrapin Station

I'm the "meaning (and ethics and aesthetics and truth and on and on) is subjective" guy. How have you not noticed that yet?

I have seen you say this, but I have not seen you, always, follow through with this.

You apparently misunderstand the implications of it, akin to an objectivist, which is curious.

So, when you say things like; "A reasonable response to what I wrote would be ...", then, what you are now suggesting is that what you just referred to as being a 'reasonable response' is in fact NOT an actual 'reasonable response' at all, but just a 'reasonable response', from your SUBJECTIVE view, only?I

If you think there's an "in fact 'reasonable response'" and not just such a thing in someone's subjective view, then you're no subjectivist.

"There's an 'in fact 'reasonable response'" is objectivism.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 12:32 PM

The meaning of words like this are systematically reassigned, and you would have read what is done with them to see this. The existence of phenomenal experience? Sartre put it, existence precedes essence, which means unlike fence posts and coffee cups, we have choices to be what we are, but notice the painful term "are". In general science, "are" is, in the final analysis, substance or physicality or material, and while in certain quarters there may be distinctions (I don't know of any, and I care not, really) between these terms, they are not given analysis at all as to distinctions in meaning, for they don't really mean anything at all. It's like a a stopping place where meaning runs out and empirical science has to stay within its prerogatives. One does not "observe" substance. One observes phenomena.

Onewya to look at the complaint I am pursuing here is to see this terminus as entirely reconceived. Existence is not a general term for bodies in space and time independent of the perception. The existence of phenomenal experience is divided, if you look to Heidegger. Existential refers to basic ontology, describing the structure of dasein (dasein is his term for human existence), where "existentiell" refers to the existence we make of ourselves in life, a teacher, a husband, a human rights activist and so on. This is our facticity. Facts, on the other hand are, as I understand his term, what science deals with, the moon having a certain mass and the like, predicatively formed actualities, Husserl called them.

You might notice that this kind of thinking puts terms like substance out of the terminal position. What now has this position is hermeneutics, which comes from an "existential" analysis human dasein.

See above. The term "stuff" is, I suspect, a vernacular term equivalent to material substance and the rest, right? Or, does it refer to Heideggerian Being? You see, H's bottom line is what he calls a equiprimordiality: phenomena are not reducible to anything, do not have a revealed foundation; in fact, you could say the foundation is that there is no foundation, **thereby lifting UP to their proper place the irrational dimensions of our existence**; all are equal against a standard of phenomenological ontology. BUT, he thinks some things are more primordial than others (??). For a working out of this contradiction you would have to read more deeply into the texts. Derrida comes along and says Heidegger is in violation of his own equiprimordiality, while Heidegger's issue with Husserl was similar: the Hermeneutic (remember the god Hermes, a messenger of the gods bringing word from beyond) foundation for all knowledge claims does not yield to some "intuition" about being. Hermes is all about circulation within Being-in-the-world. this is a closed system, given what history, culture, personal can contribute, but an open system given the freedom one has standing at the precipice of future possibilities.

Laws? Ontologically, the term is an historically constructed interpretation is brought to bear on certain contexts of human dasein's being in the world. Language is the house of Being

Of course scientific materialism explains Agency. It's just a bad explanation.

This is an actively debated issue. You know, Sartre infamously held that we are an agency of nothingness. He is derivative of Heidegger, who is derivative of Kierkegaard, who believed this was where the soul and God stand in a structure of positing spirit. Heidegger stays close to phenomenological prerogatives: what is there, before me. Me and mine are apperceptive concepts as

with all concepts. He does not, though, give any reified designation to the egoic center. there is no transcendental ego for Heidegger, nor is there transcendence, a meaningful reaching beyond language. There is me an mine, the stamp dasein's ownness. He gets this no doubt from Kant Transcendental Unity of Apperception, the "I" that is inherent in what makes experiences mine, not yours.

Doesn't it? Science tells us light is disbursed in a spectrum of wavelengths, which are

But as to qualia, the "what it is like to taste a specific apple, this particular apple now," the given, there is no way out of this: it is hermeneutically conceived. It is particle of language that was born in contexts of historical problem solving. No chicken, no egg; chickens and eggs are the same derivative structured concepts. When we use this term to conceive of a languageless presence, we do so in language. Even Being is such a term, bound to constructed meanings worked out in history.

Phenomenology recognizes such debates, and if they are confined to empirical discussions, wishes them well. Obviously. brains are associated with experience and only a fool would deny it. But mind and body are hermeneutically meaningful only. Someone like Rorty causes a lot of friction in his claim that truth conditions are essentially and without exception pragmatic will say, yes, science rules on this, and he is a monist, a materialist, but beneath such claims is Wittgenstein: such utterances are confined to rational structures of thought and these are never about what is beyond these structures. A very closed system.

You would have to start reading. For me, it liberates our conception about what it means to be human, for, and this varies among continental philosophers, the irrational parts that have been discounted as that which confounds reason and its categories, discounted in the spirit of clarity of thought, are released from the dogmatic hold science would place on them. Science is factual, reality is not reducible to what is factual. Reality is OPEN, and in this openness, there is a kind of truth that is NOT propositional (though there is no avoiding this in conceiving it), but revelatory.

Would it be fair to characterise phenomenology as the study of what it is like to be a human?

And sees the project of trying to know what anything else is, as inevitably interpretive and therefore dependent on how humans interpret?

And if so, can you briefly list the main conclusions this methodology comes to.

CHAPTER 1.189.

~

1.187. by Terrapin Station

1.185. by evolution

How?

Through the actual words that you use . . .

Yikes. That x is subjective doesn't imply that S has no stance or opinion on x. And it doesn't imply that S doesn't very strongly feel however they do on x. You're making the same error that objectivists make in attempting to understand subjectivism, yet you're supposed to be a subjectivist.

Or, could I be writing in a way to make you ASSUME and/or BELIEVE some things.

See, I specifically and purposely used those very words, because, if you EVER began asking me CLARIFYING QUESTIONS I could and would back them up with supporting evidence AND proof.

But knowing that you would just make ASSUMPTIONS instead of ASKING CLARIFYING QUESTIONS FIRST, I can now suggest to you that instead of making ASSUMPTIONS, which are CLEARLY OBVIOUSLY WRONG, you just ask me clarifying question first.

That way you can NOT be as WRONG as you have been continually SHOWING you actually ARE.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

if it would "make NO sense", to you, then there is absolutely NOTHING I nor ANY one else could say to show you otherwise, correct?

No, that's not correct. You could explain how it makes sense to you,

I COULD explain how it makes sense to me. But you CLEARLY WROTE that it "would make NO sense", anyway. I have find that if it WOULD make NO sense, to you, as you say it WOULD, then there is NO use in explaining it, to you.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

and I might be convinced that it could make sense.

When you use words that do NOT convey that you are SO CLOSED, then I might consider explaining things, to you. Until then I have NO real interest.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

You'd have to do the heavy lifting there, of course.

What is this meant to mean or imply?

I am, literally, just using words, which, literally, weigh absolutely NOTHING AT ALL.

Also, unlike you, EVERY thing I say, and mean, can be backed up and supported with actual EVIDENCE and PROOF.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

*I have seen you say this, but I have not seen you, always, follow through with this.
You apparently misunderstand the implications of it, akin to an objectivist, which is curious.*

WHY have you turned this into an 'ist' thing?

You are completely and utterly incapable of defining and clearing up what you actually mean, in a way that could be agreed with by "others", so WHY go down this path?

By the way, you say 'this' "is curious", but STILL you can NOT bring yourself to ask just even ONE clarifying question here.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

So, when you say things like; "A reasonable response to what I wrote would be ...", then, what you are now suggesting is that what you just referred to as being a 'reasonable response' is in fact NOT an actual 'reasonable response' at all, but just a 'reasonable response', from your SUBJECTIVE view, only?I

If you think there's an "in fact 'reasonable response'" and not just such a thing in someone's subjective view, then you're no subjectivist.

I have NEVER even implied that I was, let alone said that I was.

These are just MORE EXAMPLES of you making ASSUMPTIONS, which, AGAIN, just end up being totally, completely and utterly WRONG.

1.187. by Terrapin Station

"There's an 'in fact 'reasonable response'" is objectivism.

Are you even slightly AWARE that all I was doing was just HIGHLIGHTING and POINTING OUT that it is 'you' who has the tendency to write in a, "this is the fact" way.

This is backed up and supported by the CLEARLY WRITTEN WORDS above.

CHAPTER 1.190.

~

Terrapin Station on  Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 1:44 PM



1.189. by evolution

I COULD explain how it makes sense to me. But you CLEARLY WROTE that it "would make NO sense", anyway. I have find that if it WOULD make NO sense, to you, as you say it WOULD, then there is NO use in explaining it, to you.

Forget about making assumptions. I just explicitly explained to you that the above is not the case (that there would be no use in explaining it), yet you're persisting in the misconception.

I'm not encouraging your tendency to post increasingly longer rants, so that's it for this one.

CHAPTER 1.191.

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 1:54 PM

1.190. by Terrapin Station

1.189. by evolution

I COULD explain how it makes sense to me. But you CLEARLY WROTE that it "would make NO sense", anyway. I have find that if it WOULD make NO sense, to you, as you say it WOULD, then there is NO use in explaining it, to you.

Forget about making assumptions. I just explicitly explained to you that the above is not the case (that there would be no use in explaining it), yet you're persisting in the misconception.

Is what you wrote here what you REALLY meant?

1.190. by Terrapin Station

I'm not encouraging your tendency to post increasingly longer rants, so that's it for this one.

You have a GREAT tendency to use diversionary tactics and/or just leave when what I am saying is REVEALING just to much, about 'you', for your liking.

CHAPTER 1.192.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 2:07 PM

1.191. by evolution

1.190. by Terrapin Station

Forget about making assumptions. I just explicitly explained to you that the above is not the case (that there would be no use in explaining it), yet you're persisting in the misconception.

Is what you wrote here what you REALLY meant?

Yes. Maybe the "not the case . . . no use" phrasing wasn't clear to you? Some people have trouble parsing multiple "negatives."



You have a GREAT tendency to use diversionary tactics and/or just leave when what I am saying is REVEALING just to much, about 'you', for your liking.

I hate and have always hated when people start to type increasingly longer posts each round, where they tend to launch into lecturing, etc. rather than back and forths with an aim of being productive and settling things. I've explained this many times. The longer your posts get, the bigger the percentage of them that will be ignored by me, whatever they say (I don't know, because I don't actually read increasingly long posts). That there's a tendency for people to do this on message boards is one of the worst things about the format in my opinion.

CHAPTER 1.193.

~

evolution on  Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 2:50 PM

1.192. by Terrapin Station

1.191. by evolution

Is what you wrote here what you REALLY meant?

Yes. Maybe the "not the case . . . no use" phrasing wasn't clear to you?

And, maybe that part was ABSOLUTELY CLEAR.

1.192. by Terrapin Station

Some people have trouble parsing multiple "negatives."

And, some people, some times, do NOT.

Now, so if that is what you REALLY meant, then what you "explicitly explain" and what you 'actually do' and are 'actually capable of doing' can be two completely very different things. As PROVEN by what you have written, and claim, and by the way you can and can NOT comprehend things.

Also, if what you wrote is REALLY what you meant, then you agree with me (that there would be no use in explaining it). So, that ends that.

1.192. by Terrapin Station

You have a GREAT tendency to use diversionary tactics and/or just leave when what I am saying is REVEALING just to much, about 'you', for your liking.

I hate and have always hated when people start to type increasingly longer posts each round, where they tend to launch into lecturing, etc. rather than back and forths with an aim of being productive and settling things.

Well, I suggest to help to decrease what you HATE, then STOP doing what 'you', "your" 'self', HATE.

If instead of writing as though what you say and write is the absolutely TRUTH, and you wrote, and spoke, in a far more OPEN and INQUIRING way, of at least trying to understand what the other is saying and makes sense to them, then this would actual be productive in actually settling things.

Have you EVER considered that what it is that you HATE so much, is actually the VERY THING that 'you', "yourself", do?

What will be found is that whenever any one gets angry or hates what the "other" is doing, then it is ALWAYS because of what thy 'self' is actually doing.

But, you are still a long, long way off from learning about, and understanding, this.

By the way, if you want to be listened to FULLY, then you have to speak thee actual Truth of things, and NOT do what you have just done here.

Further to this, if you are REALLY serious about being productive and settling things, (which is just your way of saying, "You are NOT agreeing with me and my views", so it is YOU who is NOT being productive and not settling things), then just say, what NEEDS to be settled. And, would I be wrong that what NEEDS to be settled here, from your perspective, is that the respondents end up agreeing with your claims about what is true, right, and correct?

If no, then what does actually NEED to be settled here?

1.192. by Terrapin Station

I've explained this many times.

And so what?

Are you expecting others to bow down to you, because you "hate" what they do?

1.192. by Terrapin Station

The longer your posts get, the bigger the percentage of them that will be ignored by me, whatever they say (I don't know, because I don't actually read increasingly long posts).

I ABSOLUTELY CERTAINLY DO NOT CARE.

This is because of the VERY REASON that I am writing for.

Also, this is one great EXCUSE for when you do NOT want to ACKNOWLEDGE when you have been SHOWN TO BE WRONG, nor when you do NOT want to CLARIFY what you actually mean, because if you were to do this, then that would contradict your original claim.

1.192. by Terrapin Station

[That there's a tendency for people to do this on message boards is one of the worst things about the format in my opinion.

Okay. Some would say your insistence that what you say and claim is irrefutable and/or immovable is one of the worst things human beings can do, in message boards like this one. Some also HATE when people like 'you' do this. So, does this mean that you are going to change your ways at all?

Some also hate the fact that some people consider it their right to talk about absolutely ANY thing in threads, which have absolutely NOTHING AT ALL to do with the original post. But each to their own, others will say.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 9 4 .

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 3:01 PM



1.193. by evolution

If instead of writing as though what you say and write is the absolutely TRUTH, and you wrote, and spoke, in a far more OPEN and INQUIRING way,

If it's something subjective, I'm going to write what I feel, what my subjective disposition is. I often have little doubt re how I feel or what my subjective disposition is.

If about something objective, I'm usually not going to say something if I'm not pretty sure I know what the deal is with it (otherwise I'll just read and think more about it instead). For some objective things, I have no doubt about them. That doesn't mean that I couldn't be led to doubt them, but that would require some work, because if I have no doubt about it, I've already done a lot of work on it myself.

C H A P T E R 1 . 1 9 5 .

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 3:08 PM

1.194. by Terrapin Station

1.193. by evolution

If instead of writing as though what you say and write is the absolutely TRUTH, and you wrote, and spoke, in a far more OPEN and INQUIRING way,

If it's something subjective, I'm going to write what I feel, what my subjective disposition is.

Most people, in philosophy forums, write what they think, as what they feel has NO actual bearing on the truth nor falsehoods of what theirs or others views and claims.

1.194. by Terrapin Station

I often have little doubt re how I feel or what my subjective disposition is.

I would hope that you have NO doubt at all re how you feel nor about what your own subjective disposition is.

If you have some doubt, then I would start wondering WHY? if 'I' was 'you'.

1.194. by Terrapin Station

If about something objective, I'm usually not going to say something if I'm not pretty sure I know what the deal is with it (otherwise I'll just read and think more about it instead).

But you write considerable amounts as though you KNOW about things objectively.

This has been one point I have been trying to get you to recognize, SEE, and UNDERSTAND.

1.194. by Terrapin Station

For some objective things, I have no doubt about them. That doesn't mean that I couldn't be led to doubt them, but that would require some work, because if I have no doubt about it, I've already done a lot of work on it myself.

If you say so.

CHAPTER 1.196.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 3:11 PM



1.195. by evolution

But you write considerable amounts as though you KNOW about things objectively.

Sure, as if I know what the deal is about a lot of objective things. And indeed that's the case. What's the issue?

CHAPTER 1.197.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 3:21 PM



GE Morton wrote

Like most idealist (and mystical) ontologists you regularly invoke such phrases as "what is REALLY there," "what is truly there," etc. But offer no criterion or explanation for the adjectives "really" and "truly," or for the basis of the implied distinction between what is "really" there and what merely appears to be there. And certainly no explanation of how you gained knowledge of what is "really" there.

I agree we can set aside ("distill out") some of the conceptual superstructure we have learned to overlay upon what we perceive, i.e., perceive it eidetically (as a neonate would), without understanding it. Or at least imagine that we can. That is Kant's "sensible intuition." But without understanding it is gratuitous, and contrary to common usage, to call that edetic percept "real" or "true." Those percepts, when embedded in the best conceptual framework we're able to devise, is the only "reality" we're ever going to have. Phenomenologists, like mystics, seem to imagine that if they stare at something long enough, "clear their minds" (perhaps with the aid of fasting, sleep deprivation, or LSD) they will perceive some "reality" that has escaped everyone else's notice.

That conceptual superstructure isn't Kant's sensible intuition. It's, in its foundation given the analysis of the structure of logic in judgment, the pure forms reason. Sensible intuitions are the irrational parts of experience, sensation. For Kant, what is true is true propositions; what is real is empirical reality, and concepts without intuitions are empty, and intuitions without concepts are blind. Heidegger is working in this structure: to speak about intuitions sans concepts must be an abstraction, for to speak in the first place requires the understanding.

First, it has to be clear that not all phenomenologists think alike. I can defend my derivative position, with my own bent, a composite of what I've read.

As to "what is really there", the question is not without meaning; it is the answer where things gets interesting. Should we forget Husserl's extravagance? There are essays on this that reveal his claims regarding "things themselves" to merely a reference to what one might call "proximal" to thought. I see a bird, and instantly I think, acknowledge, the thing as a bird, replete with its eidetic content. Husserl wanted to capture this unit of presence as it is, once removed from all the phenomenologically arbitrary contextual interference, things there in the presuppositions that clutter the field. He found, says he, that when you do this phenomenological reduction, with practice, there comes out of this something Other than mere theoretical clarity. What this IS would be what many, Husserl included, take as the quasi-mystical. Of course, this makes for bad philosophy (?), But if one actually does this, faithfully...does something come of it? The account goes:

In another

letter from 1919, (Husserl) even confesses that his own move from mathematics to philosophy ran parallel to and was inspired by his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, and in private conversations he is to have said that he saw his philosophical work as a path toward God. The God mentioned in his philosophical writings is often a philosopher's God, a metonym for absolute rationality and intelligibility, as well as a name for a radical transcendence. But he saw the possibility of a renewed understanding of religion not in the construction of a rational theology, but rather in a radicalized exploration of interiority, through a return to the "inner life

There is a LOT written on this.

This radical exploration of interiority, I find, interesting, and then some. You may not, but just to be clear, the way I see it, it is not a denial of the reason and content that goes into the immediacy of the percept that determines beforehand what can be meaningfully said, but a method of clearing perception to allow other values to step forward, affective value, even transcendental value. But here, we have clearly stepped beyond given possibilities of existing thought in the general philosophical contexts of our culture. But then again, they say Tibetan Buddhist adepts have a language that simply assumes what those navigating through interiority as they do can confirm.

Dismissing this kind of thing out of hand is understandable. One thing I appreciate about phenomenology is that ideas like this can at least be allowed to stand on their own merit. I mean, it removes that interpretative gravity that pulls all meaningful thought toward empirical science.

One of Quine's "Two Dogmas" dealt with the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, not between idealism and empiricism (the other dealt with reductionism).

But it did have an impact on Kant's claim of synthetic a priori judgment, as with those in geometry and mathematics. Kant was attempting to show that space and time are a priori forms of intuition, and therefore our empirical playing field must be conceived as the mind's contribution to experience, and his argument looked specifically to the a priority of space and time, the formal intuitive conditions for experience. If Quine were right, and a priority is not qualitatively distinct from the a posteriori judgments we make about gravity, and the rest through induction, then the ground for idealizing space and time is undermined.

I've never written a paper on this, but I think the above right.

That the world has a "presence" we did not invent is itself an epistemological assumption, albeit one that we are forced to make (according to Kant). But the most we can confidently claim is that we did not intentionally, consciously, invent it. There are compelling arguments that that entire "eidetic" world which supplies the foundation for our conceptual understanding of "reality" is an artifact of the structure and functioning of our brains and nervous systems. It is a "virtual model," built of bricks, sticks, glue, and paints concocted by our brains from whole cloth --- from nothing --- of an external "reality" which we must postulate but of which we can never gain any direct knowledge.

But why call this eidetic "presence" "transcendental"? It certainly doesn't transcend us, its authors, any more than a writer's novel transcends him, except in the sense that we, like the novel, postulate an external world behind it all --- that postulate itself being a construct of our own.

As to the reference to brains and nervous systems, you already know the response to this: In the analysis into what a brain is, we are saddled with the issue of presuppositions: talk about physical objects, or anything, presupposes language. A language analytic is therefore, the true foundational level of discussion.

Also, someone like Heidegger has no truck with talk about transcendental presence (I read in Caputo's *Radical Hermeneutics* that Heidegger thought such talk was like "walking on water." Language is the house of Being, and presence is an interpretatively bound idea. But this does not close the door to novel experiences at all, as I see it. In fact, Heidegger thought we, as a thinking

culture, have lost something that causes us to be alienated, "not at home" in this world (straight from Kierkegaard, the "religious writer, H called him). Such a thing would appear quite novel if restored to a mundane mentality.

The transcendental talk I have found in Fink, Levinas, Michel Henry, and others. These are not mystics, but phenomenologists who see (as Wittgenstein did) that the-impossible-to-make-sense-of about our being here is IN immanence. This is why Wittgenstein both felt the need to bring up transcendental/mystical matters and then dismiss them as nonsense. One can reasonably ask, if it is nonsense, then, it is so in a way that the world exceeds language (sense being bound to what language can say, and this is derivative of Kierkegaard's Concept of Anxiety), or, in a way that both exceeds language AND cannot be denied at once! THIS is how transcendence finds its way into discussion, (and Husserl had introduced a method that makes theory into some partially realized revelatory event).

And if one bothers to give the East some input, and I think this reasonable, there is a lot of testimony to underscore all of this. What Husserl called epoche, a Hindu would call jnana yoga, an exercise in theory that leads to enlightenment, where enlightenment is what happens in a kind of erasure of what names and quantifies the world, making it ordinary, mundane, familiar (interesting to note: how our "sense" of the real anything but reified familiarity?)

So, it is certainly NOT Kant's claim about "something" beyond the limits of empirical reality, for this takes the idea as a pure, impassible boundary, only conceived in the abstract. It is about immanence, what lies there before you minus the imposition of an imposing predelineating interpretation that interferes with a kind of simplicity that is always there already (as a Buddhist speaks of the Buddha nature).

As Faustus5 recently pointed out here, science doesn't claim to define or explain the meanings "of all things;" but only those things within the realm of common experience about which information can be communicated via objective propositions. It reports what is publicly observable and attempts to explain it, i.e., supply causes for observed effects, via theories with predictive power. If science holds a "hegemony" over those explanations it is only because it is the only methodology known which produces communicable and actionable information. Yes, we can set that methodology aside, apprehend some experiential phenomenon eidetically, and ponder other assumptions. But unless those assumptions generate predictions that are publicly confirmable and actionable they will be vacuous; "mental masturbation."

Emphasis on, "If science holds a "hegemony" over those explanations it is only because it is the only methodology known which produces communicable and actionable information."

Well, that IS the point: empirical methods DO work very well in communicable and actionable information, IF the matter at hand is of an empirical scientific nature. Not philosophy. Not sure why this is not clear yet. Analytic philosophy is a slave to empirical assumptions. Phenomenology is not, reflects the openness of interpretation, which IS at the foundation of that is "there" before us.

I get several telling me the point is mute, but then all they have to say about anything whatever in all issues great and small regarding foundational thinking is grounded in empirical science. All such responses are a form of performative contradiction and my only guess is that they don't know

what they're saying. And you say, we CAN set methodology aside, but this doesn't work out, implicitly affirming that science IS the default carrier of all basic understanding of the world. "Of all things": whatever do you mean by this if not all things as scientifically analyzable things. Do you have something else in mind? Something not scientifically analyzable? Are you a mystic?

To me, to say one is unaware of the dominance of science as the accepted definitive analysis of all things (among reasonable people and not the lunatic fringe of religious zeal) is either disingenuousness or...?

Well, we disagree there. Philosophy is not --- or ought not be --- "a priori analysis." Indeed, that term is meaningless. Before you can analyze anything there must be something to analyze; some raw material you're seeking to breakdown and understand. No analysis is possible of the contents of an empty beaker. For epistemology and ontology that raw material is experience, percepts. For Kant what was a priori were some of the tools we use to conduct that analysis, the "categories," which are a priori only in the sense that they are "built-in" to our brains and cannot be ignored or overridden. That is, of course, a theory, that may or may not be the best we can do in explaining our own thought processes.

We can postulate properties of our own thought processes and theorize that we apply them a priori to the analysis of other phenomena. We do, after all, have some direct knowledge of those processes. But we have no direct knowledge of anything presumed to be external to us, and never will. Any properties we predicate of them a priori will be arbitrary, vacuous, and frivolous.

Put is this way, when Kant draws on observations in speaking and meaning making, then abstracts from this the structures that must be in place in order for such speaking to be possible, and then proceeds discuss time, space, and the pure form of reason, all of which are NOT empirical concepts, that one does not empirically observe time, then such things are a priori, logically prior to experience. If you want to argue that analysis reveals that a priori, on analysis, can be shown to be a posteriori, then I would say you might be right, but not in the terms of their analyses: philosophers study the structure of what is given, not what is given. If you say you know X, philosophy asks, what is the structure of knowing? And structures are not empirical things. Granted, priority in this way is what a speculative scientist does, is it not? No one has ever seen a Big Bang, but it is inferred from the trajectory of stars, a spectral analysis of their light, and so on. **BUT, the Big Bang itself is an explicit empirical construct: an exploding thing on a grand scale. That makes it a piece of (well grounded) scientific speculation, not philosophical. Philosophy draws from what is empirical (as Kant did) but discusses what is NOT empirical.** Philosophy is not an empirical field of analysis, but a presuppositional study, a one of the study of logical presupposition of what what is given: given X, what has to be the case as an analysis yields of X?

The term is not meaningless at all.

You have to drop entirely this Kantian notion of some impossible externality. Phenomenologists do not deal in this kind of thing. They only deal in what is there.

I don't know what you mean by "direct knowledge of thought processes"? Direct? Did you not above berate Husserlians for their mysterious notion of presence? Direct knowledge is an extraordinary claim. Far more extraordinary than a priori.

I'd agree that empirical science is only a part of human experience, but quibble over whether it is a "minor" part. If we measure according to the portions of our waking hours we devote to acting in and upon the empirical world --- the world described by science --- I'd guess it would constitute the dominant part. But a scientific explanation of how and why the sun shines does not purport to be an account of the human dasein, or of the entire "horizon of experience." That criticism is gratuitous.

Sorry, but did you write that you, "agree that empirical science is only a part of human experience"? What would you say is not conditioned by empirical science? What is it that lies outside the field that empirical observation cannot say, but is sufficient to warrant such a deference to it in this utterance?

As to my calling it a minor part, consider (it is not a quibbling matter at all) the reason I called into discussion the issue of metaethics. I am quite aware that no one takes this as an affair of much importance, but then, these are they who know nothing of the issue at all; they know less about metaethics than they know about phenomenology. It is not so much a field abundant in theory and jargon, but an insight, apparently difficult to understand, for reasons I do not understand: Science is about facts, and there are an infinite number of facts, and if you take Wittgenstein's great book of all facts (taken from a position of omniscience) you would not find a single fact of value, for value is not observable, nor is it inherent in logic's tautologies. One cannot speak it. It would be like speaking the color yellow, speaking is aboutness, it is the taking something "as" a construction of language, as Heidegger would put it. When we speak we are taking the world as a token of language.

But value, not the contingent statement's value, as in, this is a fine couch, such that the couch can be discussed for its virtues and failings, but value as such, the kind Wittgenstein will not discuss, because it is not contextual, not therefore contingent but absolute.

One has to keep in mind that Wittgenstein was among those, a particularly influential one, who denied empirical science access to value conditions, for apart from the contingency of circumstances, value and aesthetics cannot be expressed in language at all. That is, the GOOD of the feeling, or the bad of it, when considered abstracted from contingency and context (not unlike the way Kant abstracted reason's form from judgment), appears as, well, non contingently good and bad. Take a spear and run it through my kidney: the pain AS SUCH (again, think Kant's pure reason is reason as such) is a badness that exceeds language and is therefore transcendental.

The point I am making out of this is that science's "small part" is due to its nature as factual merely, and therefore in the final ontology (the OP is about this) stands outside, if you can stand the cliché, the very meaning of life itself. If empirical science is taken as bottom line for any foundational analysis, it necessarily ignores meta value, this transcendence of our affairs that makes everything meaningful.

Religion, as an addendum, has traditionally handled the grounding of value, the metaphysics of value, and done so obliquely, mixing contingencies with absolutes. Philosophy's job, its most authentic purpose, I would say, is to bring this back into primacy. Phenomenology allows for this. Read Levinas.

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 3:46 PM



" color yellow, speaking is aboutness" should be " color yellow; speaking is aboutness"

CHAPTER 1.199.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 10:10 PM



Atla wrote

The more I read about Heidegger, the less I get it. He thinks that philosophy is merely about our individual experience of being and what follows from it, and that's it? By itself, I wouldn't even file that under philosophy.

There is a single philosopher who changed the way things were done for a hundred years, and more. A hundred years this philosopher was either at the very center of philosophical thought, or somehow responsible for whatever was being discussed. If you read him seriously, with the intention to understand, then and only then can you take existentialism seriously, hence the reason why no one here relates at all to phenomenology.

They have not done a formal study of Immanuel Kant. I have only done a rather slipshod study, but I have read the Critique of Pure Reason cover to cover and read essays. You would, to be frank, need to do this to understand phenomenology. It is an acquired understanding, and my attempt was to make this prima facie motivating to read about this philosophy, but alas, it requires Kant to be taken seriously. Existentialism both is made possible by Kant, but is an opposition to his rationalism.

I am about done with posting for a while. My plan is to sit down with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit for the next several months. I know this is what it takes, that this is the ticket price to get access to his world and this is just the way it is. I'll have to read essays (many online) as I go; I will have to reread, and reread again; it will require reading through impossible parts, but I know they will be clearer later. It always works like this.

If you don't have this kind of interest to drive you to understand the Kierkegaard, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, and others, then you won't ever get them. All I can say is when you understand Heidegger (and I speak, of course, as an amateur philosopher) he will radically change your philosophical thinking, and your thinking about the world.

CHAPTER 1.200.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 10:22 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

My impression of Heidegger is that it's important to understand that:

(a) supposedly the first philosophy book he read as a kid, and it had a big impact on him, was Franz Brentano's *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*

and

(b) he was a student of Husserl and initially was very strongly influenced by him

I think the Brentano book led to him thinking "I'm going to sort out the 'correct sense of 'being'' once and for all," where he was shooting for something more pragmatic, but he had a very convoluted way of going about that, and his eventual break from Husserl's influence came by way of rejecting what he saw as some of the idealistic implications of Husserl's phenomenological method . . . and then he conflated the two into one project.

THAT is your impression of Heidegger???? What about presence at hand? His thoughts on instrumentality and ready to hand? His comments of Kant's transcendental aesthetic, and space and time? What about his thoughts on *geworfenheit*, *das man*, Time, freedom and human existence, and truth and *alethea*, logos, existential anxiety, ontic and ontological modes of being-in-the-world, and on and on???

Not to nag, but to even have an impression of Heidegger you would have raise that which would actually GIVE an impression.

CHAPTER 1.201.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Saturday, September 5, 2020 at 10:35 PM

*Excuse me, cupcake, but Wittgenstein (post-*Tractatus*, anyway) and Rorty are two of my favorite philosophers. I've actually read every book Rorty wrote at least twice (excepting the one or two that were strictly about politics). They have profoundly shaped my views.*

Burden of proof is on you: find me any respected Western philosopher who has ever said that science can solve "all questions".

We both know you never will, so why did you make up something so completely ridiculous?

Excuse me, pussycat, but there is absolutely no evidence whatever in your conversation of any of this. If you have an idea in mind, then put it there. Credentials? You're giving me credentials?

Argue your case, bring in ideas, tell me what you think.

Look sweetheart, honey bunch, punkin: review what you actually do. You complain. You don't think, philosophize, you complain. That's easy!

Lay it out for me sweetie. Give me YOUR philosophy, your "profoundly shaped views"?



~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 12:44 AM

1.199. by 🌿 Hereandnow

There is a single philosopher who changed the way things were done for a hundred years, and more. A hundred years this philosopher was either at the very center of philosophical thought, or somehow responsible for whatever was being discussed.

I assume you're speaking of Kant.

If you read him seriously, with the intention to understand, then and only then can you take existentialism seriously, hence the reason why no one here relates at all to phenomenology.

Failure to have read and understand Kant is hardly the reason most (non-continental) Western philosophers don't take phenomenology seriously. Nearly all of them have read Kant, and understood him, despite disagreements as to the soundness or implications of some of his arguments. They don't take phenomenology seriously because it is laden with undefined terms and non-cognitive propositions, and thus conveys no knowledge (I take knowledge to be information that enables someone to do something).

Serious philosophy, like science, is at bottom pragmatic --- it aims to improve our understanding of ourselves and the universe in which we find ourselves, so that we can better deal with the challenges it throws at us and make our stay in it more enjoyable. Whereas science aims to uncover and characterize features of the natural world and their relationships to one another, philosophers seek to clarify and strengthen the conceptual framework into which that information is fitted. Philosophical sidetracks which don't contribute to that aim attract little interest.

Phenomenologists seem to be spellbound with awe at the "miracle," and absurdity, of human existence --- the absurdity arising from the incongruous presence of creatures who demand understanding, who are driven to seek it, in a universe forever beyond their understanding. All thoughtful persons are awed by that primal fact. But they are not spellbound by it, and they don't imagine that retreating to a pre-conceptual, neonatal state and obsessing over it will somehow allow them to penetrate that impossibility and deliver them enlightenment, any more than stripping naked and gazing for hours at one's reflection in a mirror will reveal a whole lot of information about the workings of one's body.

I am about done with posting for a while.

Does that mean I shouldn't bother replying to your last reply to me?


If you don't have this kind of interest to drive you to understand the Kierkegaard, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, and others, then you won't ever get them.

If that is true it is the only subject matter of which it is. For any other the key points and theses can be summarized succinctly and capture the gist well enough to induce readers to pursue them

further. The only person who might undertake a months long reading program without some prior inkling of the contents and practical value thereof would be someone with no other demands on his time --- perhaps a prisoner locked in a cell with nothing but a sleeping mat and a stack of phenomenology books.

CHAPTER 1.203.

~

Hereandnow on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 3:49 AM



GE Morton wrote

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Professional philosophers?? Obviously. Read the post more carefully. But it's true, a person that doesn't have a kind of "Copernican Revolution" is not going to understand how this change in perspective works.

Serious philosophy, like science, is at bottom pragmatic --- it aims to improve our understanding of ourselves and the universe in which we find ourselves, so that we can better deal with the challenges it throws at us and make our stay in it more enjoyable. Whereas science aims to uncover and characterize features of the natural world and their relationships to one another, philosophers seek to clarify and strengthen the conceptual framework into which that information is fitted. Philosophical sidetracks which don't contribute to that aim attract little interest.

Serious philosophy is pragmatic? Or is it pragmatism? There is a difference. The latter is close to Heidegger, actually.

Phenomenologists seem to be spellbound with awe at the "miracle," and absurdity, of human existence --- the absurdity arising from the incongruous presence of creatures who demand understanding, who are driven to seek it, in a universe forever beyond their understanding. All thoughtful persons are awed by that primal fact. But they are not spellbound by it, and they don't imagine that retreating to a pre-conceptual, neonatal state and obsessing over it will somehow allow them to penetrate that impossibility and deliver them enlightenment, any more than stripping naked and gazing for hours at one's reflection in a mirror will reveal a whole lot of information about the workings of one's body.

Well, at least you write in paragraphs, even if you do speak imperfectly about what these philosophers think. What phenomenologists did you have in mind?

You might consider that the reason you have so little appreciation for such thinking is that relative to empirical science, you have had precious little exposure to it. This is true for everyone, for science begins in grammar school, phenomenology begins, well, it doesn't, really, for anyone, nearly. This is why I say it is an acquired understanding: one has to explicitly acquire it. Also, the trouble with analytic professional philosophers is that they don't read it either. Kant is something

of a core requirement for a phd in the history of philosophy, but read (I have it on PDF) Robert Hanna's Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy for a nice account of how he is treated with contempt after Russell. They don't think about Kant at all. They are into Frege, Strawson, Grice, Davidson, and so on. I have read papers they've written, and some I find useful. But mostly they simply tinker in very rigorous ways with the analysis of ideas. They mostly go nowhere. Phenomenologists are the only ones who know how to take the world up AS the world. Michel Henry's on The Power of Affectivity in Heidegger, for example. This brief work puts focus on the affectivity built into dasein's self realization, to put it one way. You can read this, put it down, then you will find yourself puzzling the experienced world in very intriguing ways, not simply working our an argument, the end of which is just ot publish. I know these people and their conception of philosophy is the very reason why it is free fall.

If that is true it is the only subject matter of which it is. For any other the key points and theses can be summarized succinctly and capture the gist well enough to induce readers to pursue them further. The only person who might undertake a months long reading program without some prior inkling of the contents and practical value thereof would be someone with no other demands on his time --- perhaps a prisoner locked in a cell with nothing but a sleeping mat and a stack of phenomenology books.

Not sure what there is to object to here. Who is talking about key points? "Can ...capture ...to induce": why yes, that's what I said, one can, but one has to be motivated. ???

C H A P T E R 1 . 2 0 4 .

~

Atla on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 4:13 AM

Atla wrote

The more I read about Heidegger, the less I get it. He thinks that philosophy is merely about our individual experience of being and what follows from it, and that's it? By itself, I wouldn't even file that under philosophy.

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I am about done with posting for a while. My plan is to sit down with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit for the next several months. I know this is what it takes, that this is the ticket price to get access to his world and this is just the way it is. I'll have to read essays (many online) as I go; I will have to reread, and reread again; it will require reading through impossible parts, but I know they will be clearer later. It always works like this.

If you don't have this kind of interest to drive you to understand the Kierkegaard, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, and others, then you won't ever get them. All I can say is when you understand Heidegger (and I speak, of course, as an amateur philosopher) he will radically change your philosophical thinking, and your thinking about the world.

You know what, maybe you are just full of yourself, maybe not deliberately, but you definitely seem to be fooling yourself. You keep telling me to read this and that and how they will change my thinking of the world. Well maybe you are the one lacking context.

I'm a nondualist, everything I have seen so far during these last few years on philosophy boards indicates that I've already gone beyond Kant and his followers a decade ago. There is a certain depth, a certain insight they never reached. And also I know quite a lot about human psychology, and about how many different forms the human sense of being can take, especially when it comes to gender differences. I can't even take it seriously, when these philosophers believe that THEIR rather typical-for-them, rather specific sense of being is THE sense of being. Talk about getting lost in your own mind, and being full of yourself. That's not even philosophy to me, philosophy is about the big questions.

CHAPTER 1.205.

~



Terrapin Station wrote

My impression of Heidegger is that it's important to understand that:

(a) supposedly the first philosophy book he read as a kid, and it had a big impact on him, was Franz Brentano's *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*

and

(b) he was a student of Husserl and initially was very strongly influenced by him

I think the Brentano book led to him thinking "I'm going to sort out the 'correct sense of 'being'' once and for all," where he was shooting for something more pragmatic, but he had a very convoluted way of going about that, and his eventual break from Husserl's influence came by way of rejecting what he saw as some of the idealistic implications of Husserl's phenomenological method . . . and then he conflated the two into one project.

THAT is your impression of Heidegger???? What about presence at hand? His thoughts on instrumentality and ready to hand? His comments of Kant's transcendental aesthetic, and space and time? What about his thoughts on *geworfenheit*, *das man*, Time, freedom and human existence, and truth and *alethea*, logos, existential anxiety, ontic and ontological modes of being-in-the-world, and on and on???

Not to nag, but to even have an impression of Heidegger you would have raise that which would actually GIVE an impression.

Well that's certainly an odd way to read my post.

Isn't it obvious that I'm talking about motivations, a la personal historical catalysts, for his overall "project", and that I'm not saying what I'm mentioning is exhaustive in even that? And again, from an angle of trying to understand what he was on about and why, with his odd obsession with "being" as a concept; his odd notion that there's something perplexing about it that needs to be sorted out, and over the course of a book that was supposed to be three times as long as the already-bloated *Being and Time* no less. A book full of "speaking in tongues" neologisms and tortured prose like "Nothing itself nothings" and "sense is that onto which projection projects, in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something." My aim obviously wasn't to give an outline of the project itself.

CHAPTER 1.206.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 8:50 AM



It's such a shame that science has no hegemony in modern society.

There is so much fakery out there.

Misused statistics.

False claims


Flat earthers

Ignored scientists such as Einstein and Oppenheimer; Lovelock and Semel Weiss throughout

history.
Anti vaxers.
Religion.
On and on it goes

CHAPTER 1.207.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 8:52 AM

Another howler of tortured prose is "the quest for the being of beings in its difference from being." LOL



CHAPTER 1.208.

~

Atla on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 9:46 AM

1.199. by *Hereandnow*

Atla wrote

The more I read about Heidegger, the less I get it. He thinks that philosophy is merely about our individual experience of being and what follows from it, and that's it? By itself, I wouldn't even file that under philosophy.

There is a single philosopher who changed the way things were done for a hundred years, and more. A hundred years this philosopher was either at the very center of philosophical thought, or somehow responsible for whatever was being discussed. If you read him seriously, with the intention to understand, then and only then can you take existentialism seriously, hence the reason why no one here relates at all to phenomenology.

They have not done a formal study of Immanuel Kant. I have only done a rather slipshod study, but I have read the Critique of Pure Reason cover to cover and read essays. You would, to be frank, need to do this to understand phenomenology. It is an acquired understanding, and my attempt was to make this prima facie motivating to read about this philosophy, but alas, it requires Kant to be taken seriously. Existentialism both is made possible by Kant, but is an opposition to his rationalism.

I am about done with posting for a while. My plan is to sit down with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit for the next several months. I know this is what it takes, that this is the ticket price to get access to his world and this is just the way it is. I'll have to read essays (many online) as I go; I will have to reread, and reread again; it will require reading through impossible parts, but I know they will be clearer later. It always works like this.

If you don't have this kind of interest to drive you to understand the Kierkegaard, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, and others, then you won't ever get them. All I can say is when you understand Heidegger (and I speak, of course, as an amateur philosopher) he will radically change your philosophical thinking, and your thinking about the world.

Though you're correct that most people don't even make it to the stage of the inner investigations, including a few people in this topic. They are just spouting clueless platitudes nothing more.

CHAPTER 1.209.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 11:26 AM



1.206. by Sculptor1

It's such a shame that science has no hegemony in modern society.

There is so much fakery out there.

Misused statistics.

False claims

Flat earthers

Ignored scientists such as Einstein and Oppenheimer; Lovelock and Semel Weiss throughout history.

Anti vaxers.

Religion.

On and on it goes

And yet there are examples like the UK government's oft-repeated claims to be "following the science" when their actions and decisions are *political* ones. In this case, the government are simply trying to justify their incompetence by claiming the backing of science in a scenario where science has no relevance. And we can also look at philosophy forums, where many contributors recommend science as the only means of investigating life, the universe and everything. Subjects like metaphysics are ridiculed and dismissed because they are outside the purview of science.

I agree with you to the extent that *sometimes* my take on this is reversed: there are circumstances when science is the most useful and appropriate tool to address a particular issue, but it is not employed. But science is also, and often, misapplied, and this is the hegemony of science that the OP refers to. IMO, of course.

CHAPTER 1.210.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 12:52 PM



1.209. by Pattern-chaser

1.206. by Sculptor1

It's such a shame that science has no hegemony in modern society.

There is so much fakery out there.

Misused statistics.

False claims

Flat earthers

Ignored scientists such as Einstein and Oppenheimer; Lovelock and Semel Weiss throughout history.

Anti vaxers.

Religion.

On and on it goes

And yet there are examples like the UK government's oft-repeated claims to be "following the science" when their actions and decisions are political ones.

You make my point for me. The government as using "science" as a sound bite. Science does not suggest what you do in a crisis, it only supplies the evidence.

And exactly, whilst claiming to "follow the science" they have basically ignored it.

In this case, the government are simply trying to justify their incompetence by claiming the backing of science in a scenario where science has no relevance. And we can also look at philosophy forums, where many contributors recommend science as the only means of investigating life, the universe and everything.

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

Subjects like metaphysics are ridiculed and dismissed because they are outside the purview of science.

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

Scientific claims of laws and definitions are all metaphysics.

The science works whether you know that or not.

I agree with you to the extent that sometimes my take on this is reversed: there are circumstances when science is the most useful and appropriate tool to address a particular issue, but it is not employed. But science is also, and often, misapplied, and this is the hegemony of science that the OP refers to. IMO, of course.

There is no hegemony of science. All situations can benefit from science, but at the end of the day it's what you do with the information that science can provide.

Science might be able to demonstrate that blond haired, blue eyed children do better in IQ tests than black skinned ones; but that does not validate nazism. It might just as well suggest that blacked skinned children suffer from prejudice in the school system, and might suggest ways to reform, giving people better chances.

But were science to have hegemony the evidence would be front and centre, rather than manipulated or ignored as it most generally is.

CHAPTER 1.211.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 1:30 PM



1.209. by Pattern-chaser

In this case, the government are simply trying to justify their incompetence by claiming the backing of science in a scenario where science has no relevance. And we can also look at philosophy forums, where many contributors recommend science as the only means of investigating life, the universe and everything.

1.210. by Sculptor1

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

1.209. by Pattern-chaser

Subjects like metaphysics are ridiculed and dismissed because they are outside the purview of science.

1.210. by Sculptor1

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

In both cases, you have been here in this forum, and participated in enough discussions, to see that what I describe sometimes happens here. I'm not going trawling for specifics, when we both know well what is posted here.

CHAPTER 1.212.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 2:37 PM

1.202. by GE Morton

1.199. by Hereandnow

There is a single philosopher who changed the way things were done for a hundred years, and more. A hundred years this philosopher was either at the very center of philosophical thought, or somehow responsible for whatever was being discussed.

I assume you're speaking of Kant.

If you read him seriously, with the intention to understand, then and only then can you take existentialism seriously, hence the reason why no one here relates at all to phenomenology.

Failure to have read and understand Kant is hardly the reason most (non-continental) Western philosophers don't take phenomenology seriously. Nearly all of them have read Kant, and understood him, despite disagreements as to the soundness or implications of some of his arguments. They don't take phenomenology seriously because it is laden with undefined terms and non-cognitive propositions, and thus conveys no knowledge (I take knowledge to be information that enables someone to do something).

Serious philosophy, like science, is at bottom pragmatic --- it aims to improve our understanding of ourselves and the universe in which we find ourselves, so that we can better deal with the challenges it throws at us and make our stay in it more enjoyable. Whereas science aims to uncover and characterize features of the natural world and their relationships to one another, philosophers seek to clarify and strengthen the conceptual framework into which that information is fitted. Philosophical sidetracks which don't contribute to that aim attract little interest.

Phenomenologists seem to be spellbound with awe at the "miracle," and absurdity, of human existence --- the absurdity arising from the incongruous presence of creatures who demand understanding, who are driven to seek it, in a universe forever beyond their understanding. All thoughtful persons are awed by that primal fact. But they are not spellbound by it, and they don't imagine that retreating to a pre-conceptual, neonatal state and obsessing over it will somehow allow them to penetrate that impossibility and deliver them enlightenment, any more than stripping naked and gazing for hours at one's reflection in a mirror will reveal a whole lot of information about the workings of one's body.

I am about done with posting for a while.

Does that mean I shouldn't bother replying to your last reply to me?

If you don't have this kind of interest to drive you to understand the Kierkegaard, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, and others, then you won't ever get them.

If that is true it is the only subject matter of which it is. For any other the key points and theses can be summarized succinctly and capture the gist well enough to induce readers to pursue them further. The only person who might undertake a months long reading program without some prior inkling of the contents and practical value thereof would be someone with no other demands on his time --- perhaps a prisoner locked in a cell with nothing but a sleeping mat and a stack of phenomenology books.

As someone with no education in philosophy (except some theology) and interested in ideas not who said them, I think you make some fair points here.

I appreciate HAN's willingness to give extensive answers to all-comers, but it shouldn't be this hard to get some concrete idea of the key insights or knowledge phenomenology claims to offer.

CHAPTER 1.213.

~

Faustus5 on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 3:34 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

1.201. by  Hereandnow

Excuse me, pussycat, but there is absolutely no evidence whatever in your conversation of any of this.

The following is a direct cut and paste from what you wrote on September 3 2020, time stamp 8:19 AM:

Analytic philosophy IS an implicit endorsement of scientific paradigms to address all questions. . .

This claim is a view no mainstream analytic philosopher has ever espoused, not even implicitly. So stop playing games.

1.201. by  Hereandnow

Argue your case, bring in ideas, tell me what you think.

I think that when science was created by philosophers and broke off to become its own disciple, this was Western philosophy finally figuring out the right way to do foundational ontology. And since then, philosophy has had almost nothing worthwhile to say on the subject. Now, this is not the same thing as saying all philosophy related to science is worthless. Whether scientists admit it or not, philosophers still have valid contributions to make in biology, cosmology, and especially consciousness studies.

But I think it is extraordinarily unlikely, approaching the impossible, that any of those contributions is ever going to flow from works in phenomenology.

CHAPTER 1.214.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 4:38 PM



1.211. by Pattern-chaser

1.209. by Pattern-chaser

In this case, the government are simply trying to justify their incompetence by claiming the backing of science in a scenario where science has no relevance. And we can also look at philosophy forums, where many contributors recommend science as the only means of investigating life, the universe and everything.

1.210. by Sculptor1

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

1.209. by Pattern-chaser

Subjects like metaphysics are ridiculed and dismissed because they are outside the purview of science.

1.210. by Sculptor1

Pointless trying to argue with a strawman. Where's your evidence?

In both cases, you have been here in this forum, and participated in enough discussions, to see that what I describe sometimes happens here. I'm not going trawling for specifics, when we both know well what is posted here.

All I see is one caricature heaped upon another.

Science, good science, is worthy of trust where most other disciplines rely on Persuasion and Guile. If that is what you mean, I see no problem. But what I do **not** see is general optimism in science, nor do I see any kind of hegemony.

On the contrary, in my life time I have seen science systematically denigrated and generally blamed for things that science, as such, as no responsibility to bear.


If Oppenheimer had been listened to the world would not be dangerously over burdened with nuclear weapons. Yet science gets blamed.

If the findings of science had been taken more seriously there might be no pandemic, the incidence of deaths due to malaria would be less; climate change would be under control; pollution less.

What I see is scientists shouting warnings and the rest of the world treating them like Casandra at the gates of Troy.

CHAPTER 1.215.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 5:14 PM



1.214. by Sculptor1

In my life time I have seen science systematically denigrated and generally blamed for things that science, as such, as no responsibility to bear.

If Oppenheimer had been listened to the world would not be dangerously over burdened with nuclear weapons. Yet science gets blamed.

If the findings of science had been taken more seriously there might be no pandemic, the incidence of deaths due to malaria would be less; climate change would be under control; pollution less.

What I see is scientists shouting warnings and the rest of the world treating them like Casandra at the gates of Troy.

I don't quarrel with any of that.

Nevertheless, it is also the case that science is often misapplied, which is the "hegemony" we are discussing here. As I said:

1.209. by Pattern-chaser

I agree with you to the extent that sometimes my take on this is reversed: there are circumstances when science is the most useful and appropriate tool to address a particular issue, but it is not employed. But science is also, and often, misapplied, and this is the hegemony of science that the OP refers to. IMO, of course.

I have acknowledged and accepted the points you remade already. Do you not see that science is also often misapplied?

CHAPTER 1.216.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 8:46 PM

Terrapin Station wrote

Another howler of tortured prose is "the quest for the being of beings in its difference from being." LOL



Here, TP, is another great howler:

Bosonic string theory, however, is not a realistic theory. It predicts states of negative mass called tachyons, which lead to the instability and decay of D-branes. More importantly, it does not contain fermions, which differ from bosons in that fermions are particles of half-integer spin while bosons have integer spin. LOL

Context is everything.



GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 11:11 PM

1.203. by *Hereandnow*

Professional philosophers?? Obviously. Read the post more carefully. But it's true, a person that doesn't have a kind of "Copernican Revolution" is not going to understand how this change in perspective works.

The Copernican Revolution was prompted by observational evidence. Phenomenology has yet to produce or cite an iota of that.

Serious philosophy is pragmatic? Or is it pragmatism? There is a difference. The latter is close to Heidegger, actually.

Pragmatism is a particular philosophical school. But the discipline as a whole is pragmatic in the vernacular sense --- it aims to improve our understanding of ourselves and the universe in which we live, in order that we may make better use of it and reduce the dangers it poses. Phenomenology offers nothing that advances those ends, as far as most Western philosophers can see.

You might consider that the reason you have so little appreciation for such thinking is that relative to empirical science, you have had precious little exposure to it. This is true for everyone, for science begins in grammar school, phenomenology begins, well, it doesn't, really, for anyone, nearly.

That is true. Neither have many students been exposed to, say, animism, witchcraft, astrology, scientology, etc., at least in common schools. For the same reason.

Phenomenologists are the only ones who know how to take the world up AS the world.

All philosophers, and scientists, "take up" the world "as a world." What else would they take it up as? But once taken up it must be broken down, the distinguishable parts/aspects isolated and broken down further. That is what *analysis* means.

Not sure what there is to object to here. Who is talking about key points? "Can ...capture ...to induce": why yes, that's what I said, one can, but one has to be motivated. ???

Motivation follows stimulus, not the other way around. No one makes an investment in a venture that exhibits no prospects for a return.



GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 11:20 PM

1.216. by  Hereandnow

Terrapin Station wrote

Another howler of tortured prose is "the quest for the being of beings in its difference from being."

LOL

Here, TP, is another great howler:

Bosonic string theory, however, is not a realistic theory. It predicts states of negative mass called tachyons, which lead to the instability and decay of D-branes. More importantly, it does not contain fermions, which differ from bosons in that fermions are particles of half-integer spin while bosons have integer spin. LOL

Context is everything.

All of the terms in your quote are well-defined in the theories in which they are used. There are many problems with that theory, but it is at least coherent. The sentence TP quoted is meaningless. "Being" seems to be used with three different senses, none of them the everyday sense, and none of them are defined. It is gobbledygook.

CHAPTER 1.219.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 12:08 AM



1.216. by  Hereandnow

Terrapin Station wrote

Another howler of tortured prose is "the quest for the being of beings in its difference from being."

LOL

Here, TP, is another great howler:

Bosonic string theory, however, is not a realistic theory. It predicts states of negative mass called tachyons, which lead to the instability and decay of D-branes. More importantly, it does not contain fermions, which differ from bosons in that fermions are particles of half-integer spin while bosons have integer spin. LOL

Context is everything.

Good thing that I'm not endorsing whoever wrote that.

CHAPTER 1.220.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 4:36 PM

1.215. by Pattern-chaser



1.214. by Sculptor1

In my life time I have seen science systematically denigrated and generally blamed for things that science, as such, as no responsibility to bear.

If Oppenheimer had been listened to the world would not be dangerously over burdened with nuclear weapons. Yet science gets blamed.

If the findings of science had been taken more seriously there might be no pandemic, the incidence of deaths due to malaria would be less; climate change would be under control; pollution less.

What I see is scientists shouting warnings and the rest of the world treating them like Casandra at the gates of Troy.

I don't quarrel with any of that.

Nevertheless, it is also the case that science is often misapplied, which is the "hegemony" we are discussing here. As I said:

1.209. by Pattern-chaser

I agree with you to the extent that sometimes my take on this is reversed: there are circumstances when science is the most useful and appropriate tool to address a particular issue, but it is not employed. But science is also, and often, misapplied, and this is the hegemony of science that the OP refers to. IMO, of course.

I have acknowledged and accepted the points you remade already. Do you not see that science is also often misapplied?

"Science misapplied" is not Science.

It's not a "hegemony OF science." But just the usual hegemony of twits, corporations, the rich, the idle and the greedy.

CHAPTER 1.221.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 6:58 PM



Faustus5 wrote

This claim is a view no mainstream analytic philosopher has ever espoused, not even implicitly. So stop playing games.

Yes, they have. It's just that the empirical premise is simply implied. I'll tell you what, you name any analytic philosopher, of your choosing, and I will show how this philosopher's conception of the world at the level of basic assumptions is empirical. I mean, there is a reason why Dennett tries to reduce consciousness to "layered computer programs running on the hardware of the brain" and when Mackie discusses ethics his argument from queerness goes to standards of intelligible thought produced by empirical science; there is a reason why Quine and many analytic


philosophers' have been described as defending a kind of behaviorism.

Just name him/her, and I will do a bit of reading and explain (but frankly, I think the point should be clear by now. You should be looking for a philosopher to proclaim: I begin my thoughts on the matter with an explicit endorsement of empirical science! Robert Hanna says the post-Quinean (after his two Dogmas paper) analytic world is in awful shape, and "good riddance" because

.....of the dogmatic obsession of post-Quinean, post-classical Analytic philosophy with scientific naturalism since 1950, and above all

CHAPTER 1.222.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:08 PM




1.221. by [Hereandnow](#)

For one, how is "the empirical premise" the same thing as "the scientific paradigm"?

CHAPTER 1.223.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:19 PM



GE Morton wrote

All of the terms in your quote are well-defined in the theories in which they are used. There are many problems with that theory, but it is at least coherent. The sentence TP quoted is meaningless. "Being" seems to be used with three different senses, none of them the everyday sense, and none of them are defined. It is gobbledygook.

"The quest for the being of beings in its difference from being": "from being" takes the quote out of context and I would have to read the fuller text. His question is about being in the most foundational sense, not particular beings, as a chair or an eidtic entity like a set of numbers, but the question of being as such, when the predicative designations is put aside. Entities come replete predicatively bundled, so to speak, and there is no sense in the ideas of it being otherwise. But since philosophy's purpose is to provide an analytic at the most foundational level possible, and Being as such is this level, he begins here, but it is not with an eye to elucidate Being, the eternal essence of all things (why is there something rather than nothing, sort of thing), but rather to use this term to establish how far down the rabbit hole analysis can go and what this terminal place is.

So the quote SOUNDS absurd to anyone who has read nothing. It is always like this. Rorty calls those who talk like this (he thought Heidegger was among the three greatest philosophers of the 20th century) know nothings.

CHAPTER 1.224.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:21 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

For one, how is "the empirical premise" the same thing as "the scientific paradigm"?

How is it not? Ask yourself, What is a premise? What is a paradigm? What is a theory? What is a proposition?

this is elementary

CHAPTER 1.225.

~

Hereandnow on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:33 PM



Sculptor1 wrote

It's such a shame that science has no hegemony in modern society.

There is so much fakery out there.

Misused statistics.

False claims

Flat earthers

Ignored scientists such as Einstein and Oppenheimer; Lovelock and Semel Weiss throughout history.

Anti vaxers.

Religion.

On and on it goes

For crying out loud Sculptor 1, the issue on the table is not at all about how science is being discredited by right wing propaganda. It is a much broader issue. It is about how science is unfit for a foundational philosophical ontology.

I mean, seriously??

Dennett's Defense of Qualia

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:33 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).

1.221. by  Hereandnow

Faustus5 wrote

This claim is a view no mainstream analytic philosopher has ever espoused, not even implicitly. So stop playing games.

Yes, they have. It's just that the empirical premise is simply implied. I'll tell you what, you name any analytic philosopher, of your choosing, and I will show how this philosopher's conception of the world at the level of basic assumptions is empirical.

That would not be enough to back up your utterly goofy claim. You need to find an analytic philosopher declaring, in his or her own words, that science can be used to literally solve all questions. Nothing short of this will do.

1.221. by  Hereandnow

I mean, there is a reason why Dennett tries to reduce consciousness to "layered computer programs running on the hardware of the brain"...

Well, I know Dennett's work more than any philosopher on earth, probably better than anyone you've ever met, and his theory of consciousness is explicitly anti-reductionist, so you're kind of getting things backwards right from the start. But I suppose if you've only encountered his ideas third or fourth hand, that sound bite is what a person might come away with.

At any rate, you get the details wrong, but your larger point remains correct in this particular case: Dennett's approach to consciousness is scientific and empirical to the core. Hell, the bibliography for *Consciousness Explained* cites scientists far more than philosophers.

Now, can you please articulate why treating consciousness as an evolved biological phenomenon is somehow wrong? This should be rich.


And can you please articulate why the other philosophers you mention are misguided in using empirical methods?

Let me stress again that I do think some scientists and some philosophers can be found guilty of scientific over-reach (and I should add that their peers tend to be pretty good at slapping them down for it), but you have to take it case by case and examine the particular merits of the arguments they make instead of making unfounded generalizations about the entire field. I just

deny that there is some sort of over-arching problem where science is constantly and routinely abused and used to solve problems where it is an inappropriate tool.

CHAPTER 2.2.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 7:52 PM



1.223. by [Hereandnow](#)

but the question of being as such, when the predicative designations is put aside. Entities come replete predicatively bundled, so to speak, and there is no sense in the ideas of it being otherwise.

That doesn't help, because the idea of that is nonsensical. You can't have existents of any sort without properties.

But since philosophy's purpose is to provide an analytic at the most foundational level possible, and Being as such is this level, he begins here, but it is not with an eye to elucidate Being, the eternal essence of all things (why is there something rather than nothing, sort of thing),

"Essences" only exist as rigid requirements in an individual's concepts. No essence as such would be "eternal." "Why is there something" is a rather silly question. There's no reason there should be nothing instead, so that it would be a mystery that there is something, and the question usually has a connotation almost of there being an intelligent reason behind the brute fact that things exist, which is also nonsense.

CHAPTER 2.3.

~

Atla on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 8:52 PM

Phenomenalists like Heidegger find fundamental stuff within their own minds that's simply not there. Qualia eliminativists like Dennett do away with experience altogether, even though it's simply always there.

Sigh.

CHAPTER 2.4.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:01 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.3. by Atla

Phenomenalists like Heidegger find fundamental stuff within their own minds that's simply not there. Qualia eliminativists like Dennett do away with experience altogether, even though it's simply always there.

Sigh.

No, Dennett just thinks experiences don't have all the qualities that believers in qualia insist they do. He's more of a deflationist than an eliminativist.

CHAPTER 2.5.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:02 PM



Terrapin Station wrote

That doesn't help, because the idea of that is nonsensical. You can't have existents of any sort without properties.

That's what Heidegger said (as well as Husserl. A thing is an "predicatively formed affair of actuality"). He takes Being as such as a badly misunderstood concept. These mysterious intuitions, he said, one might have of Being are what he is trying to give some articulation to. He thinks we have to understand Being as a foundational concept in an analytic of Time: I approach a thing, it IS there. What is it that constitutes this awareness of the thing before me? It is not some pure intimation of Being, for, as you say above, no sense can be made of this. He sees that before I even approach the thing, I am equipped with the ability to acknowledge it AS something, some reference to language, a foreknowledge of what couches and chairs ARE before we can analyze what it means that things ARE. The areness, if you will, is bound, in every case, always, already, bound to the pre understanding, so the question of what it means for something to be is analyzable to the temporal conditions that are in place in order for a "there is" or a "I am" to occur at all. this is why Heidegger's ontology is as foundational as it can get: when a scientific account is about planets and chromosomes, the phenomenological ontology is about what it is for a thing to be at all, so that when you approach the microscope, there is a constitution, if you like, a paradigmatically informed apperceptive constitution that makes encounters at all meaningful, and thus, the scientist's work meaningful.

Heidegger says at root, it is all interpretation. Now, his analysis of what an interpretative act IS requires looking into his thinking.

"Essences" only exist as rigid requirements in an individual's concepts. No essence as such would be "eternal." "Why is there something" is a rather silly question. There's no reason there should be nothing instead, so that it would be a mystery that there is something, and the question usually has a connotation almost of there being an intelligent reason behind the brute fact that things exist, which is also nonsense.

Right. Now I do recall saying to someone that phenomenologists are all different. There are those who take phenomenology another direction. When attention is placed on the interpretative act that

engages the world, it brings philosophical attention to what is there, in the phenomenal act of recognition. This is why science plays no part in phenomenological analyses: Attention is on the act of perception, or apperception, itself. Studying the structure of time, the present and the literal "making" of our existence (hence Sartre's existence precedes essence: we make what we are in the fleeting "nothingness" of the present moment moving into the future) by freely choosing among the possibilities our history provides. We are, therefore, determined insofar as our past is made of the stuff of culture and language, a body of possibilities, but free in that the future is nothing, unmade.

One thing I like about this, is that it allows a good liberal like myself to look to social conditions as the cause of poverty and ignorance, after all, it is *our history that determines our possibilities*, but at the same time, does not undo the dignity of freedom (Skinner's term), for there is in this a clear recognition of what it is to stand at the precipice of the future and choose one direction or another.

It does get interesting, believe it or not. Perhaps you can see why phenomenologists take special note of that moment what one stops simply acting as a kind of automaton, just doing this and that, getting a job, buying a house, and on and on, and wakes up to ask the question regarding Being: what does it mean to be here" Why am I here at all? Why are we born to suffer and die? And so on. Questions get quite poignant if you are among those born into nothing but suffering. Why IS it that things are like this? Heidegger thinks when you get to this juncture, you begin to realize your own freedom, as you stand apart from history that would otherwise simply move you along unconsciously. Only now are you free. Freedom requires one to step away from unconscious behavior. When you do this, you witness possibilities, as when I stop typing, look up and consider all things and why they are.

Then you find Jaspers' *The Encompassing*, Henry's *Affectivity*, Kierkegaard's *existential Anxiety*, Levinas' *Infinity*, and so forth. All terms alien to analytic philosophy's lexicon. Of course, derision is easy with kind of thing. It all does sound very weird. But this subsides with reading.

CHAPTER 2.6.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:05 PM

HAN

You should be looking for a philosopher to proclaim: I begin my thoughts on the matter with an explicit endorsement of empirical science!

The thing is HAN, I think you have a similar problem. As soon as you make a "we..." statement, you implicitly assume you and I share a world we are located in which we can agree we know things about. Science draws its lines at what can be known inter-subjectively, and so do you. But your lines seem to shift depending on what question is put. Which gives me the impression that all the difficult to parse terminology might be masking a basic ontological problem.

You should be able to clearly lay out the implicit ontological assumptions your phenomenological methodology relies on.

CHAPTER 2.7.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:09 PM

2.4. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.3. by *Atla*

Phenomenalists like Heidegger find fundamental stuff within their own minds that's simply not there. Qualia eliminativists like Dennett do away with experience altogether, even though it's simply always there.

Sigh.

No, Dennett just thinks experiences don't have all the qualities that believers in qualia insist they do. He's more of a deflationist than an eliminativist.

We've been over this already. First thing anyone with some sense does, is use a deflated meaning of qualia. But that deflated qualia still has to be part of one's worldview, if one claims to have explained consciousness. Dennett just seems to deflate it into nonexistence, eliminate it.

CHAPTER 2.8.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:12 PM

1.225. by *Hereandnow*

Sculptor1 wrote

It's such a shame that science has no hegemony in modern society.

There is so much fakery out there.

Misused statistics.

False claims

Flat earthers

Ignored scientists such as Einstein and Oppenheimer; Lovelock and Semel Weiss throughout history.

Anti vaxers.

Religion.

On and on it goes

For crying out loud Sculptor 1, the issue on the table is not at all about how science is being discredited by right wing propaganda. It is a much broader issue. It is about how science is unfit for a foundational philosophical ontology.

I mean, seriously??



But science is perfectly fit for the foundation of all knowledge; Just ask Locke Hume, and Newton, among many others.

I mean seriously. How can you claim to know anything without the empiric paradigm. It is the basis of all things.

There can be no ontology without the evidence that drives it.

Unless you want to sit in a dark cave and imagine the world you prefer to live in, you are basically stuck with EVIDENCE.

CHAPTER 2.9.

~

Gertie on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:17 PM

2.4. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.3. by *Atla*

Phenomenalists like Heidegger find fundamental stuff within their own minds that's simply not there. Qualia eliminativists like Dennett do away with experience altogether, even though it's simply always there.

Sigh.

No, Dennett just thinks experiences don't have all the qualities that believers in qualia insist they do. He's more of a deflationist than an eliminativist.

What qualities does Dennett 'deflate' qualia to?

CHAPTER 2.10.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:20 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.7. by *Atla*

2.4. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

No, Dennett just thinks experiences don't have all the qualities that believers in qualia insist they do. He's more of a deflationist than an eliminativist.

We've been over this already. First thing anyone with some sense does, is use a deflated meaning of qualia. But that deflated qualia still has to be part of one's worldview, if one claims to have explained consciousness. Dennett just seems to deflate it into nonexistence, eliminate it.


You can't find him doing this in his own words, which right away should ring alarm bells if you have any intellectual honesty and think accurately representing views you disagree with is

essential to being a good scholar.

I mean, common sense alone should dictate that if he squabbles with people who openly call themselves eliminativists over their eliminativism, it's kind of stupid to call him one.

CHAPTER 2.11.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:23 PM



Faustus5 wrote

Well, I know Dennett's work more than any philosopher on earth, probably better than anyone you've ever met, and his theory of consciousness is explicitly anti-reductionist, so you're kind of getting things backwards right from the start. But I suppose if you've only encountered his ideas third or fourth hand, that sound bite is what a person might come away with.

*At any rate, you get the details wrong, but your larger point remains correct in this particular case: Dennett's approach to consciousness is scientific and empirical to the core. Hell, the bibliography for *Consciousness Explained* cites scientists far more than philosophers.*

Details?? I don't recall one.

The anti reductionism you are talking about is the resistance to a hasty reduction dismissing complexity. Of course, his objections are all grounded in empirical thought and analyses. I am not at all sure why you think I get things backwards right from the start. I do note that I asked you for one philosopher you could think of as a counter example to my claim that empirical science had hegemony in analytic philosophy, and you give me dennett, who you say is, "empirical to the core." Interesting strategy.

Now, can you please articulate why treating consciousness as a evolved biological phenomena is somehow wrong? This should be rich.

And can you please articulate why the other philosophers you mention are misguided in using empirical methods?

Let me stress again that I do think some scientists and some philosophers can be found guilty of scientific over-reach (and I should add that their peers tend to be pretty good at slapping them down for it), but you have to take it case by case and examine the particular merits of the arguments they make instead of making unfounded generalizations about the entire field. I just deny that there is some sort of over-arching problem where science is constantly and routinely abused and used to solve problems where it is an inappropriate tool.

You sound exactly like a person who has never in his entire life come within a parsec of phenomenology. So full of opinion, and NO reading at all. Astounding, really. Do you handle all your affairs like this?

Read what i wrote to TS just now.

CHAPTER 2.12.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:31 PM

2.10. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.7. by Atla

We've been over this already. First thing anyone with some sense does, is use a deflated meaning of qualia. But that deflated qualia still has to be part of one's worldview, if one claims to have explained consciousness. Dennett just seems to deflate it into nonexistence, eliminate it.

You can't find him doing this in his own words, which right away should ring alarm bells if you have any intellectual honesty and think accurately representing views you disagree with is essential to being a good scholar.

I mean, common sense alone should dictate that if he squabbles with people who openly call themselves eliminativists over their eliminativism, it's kind of stupid to call him one.

Where did Dennett ever address what qualia actually is? The issue is not what he said, it's what he what didn't say. And there are different kinds of eliminativisms. Try some of that common sense.

CHAPTER 2.13.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, September 7, 2020 at 9:43 PM

2.10. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.7. by Atla

We've been over this already. First thing anyone with some sense does, is use a deflated meaning of qualia. But that deflated qualia still has to be part of one's worldview, if one claims to have explained consciousness. Dennett just seems to deflate it into nonexistence, eliminate it.

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I mean, common sense alone should dictate that if he squabbles with people who openly call themselves eliminativists over their eliminativism, it's kind of stupid to call him one.

It doesn't help either that Dennett sometimes says things like: 'Far better, tactically, to declare that there simply are no qualia at all'.

CHAPTER 2.14.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 11:19 PM



2.5. by  Hereandnow

Terrapin Station wrote

That doesn't help, because the idea of that is nonsensical. You can't have existents of any sort without properties.

That's what Heidegger said (as well as Husserl. A thing is an "predicatively formed affair of actuality").

It sure isn't what you just said.

He takes Being as such as a badly misunderstood concept. These mysterious intuitions, he said, one might have of Being are what he is trying to give some articulation to. He thinks we have to understand Being as a foundational concept in an analytic of Time: I approach a thing, it IS there. What is it that constitutes this awareness of the thing before me? It is not some pure intimation of Being, for, as you say above, no sense can be made of this.

Ontology isn't epistemology. "What is it that constitutes this awareness of the thing before me? It is not some pure intimation of Being" --this is epistemology.

CHAPTER 2.15.

~

GE Morton on  Monday, September 7, 2020 at 11:53 PM

1.221. by  Hereandnow

Yes, they have. It's just that the empirical premise is simply implied. I'll tell you what, you name any analytic philosopher, of your choosing, and I will show how this philosopher's conception of the world at the level of basic assumptions is empirical.

Well, yes. Information acquired empirically, via the senses, is indeed the raw material from which all concepts concerning things outside ourselves are forged, in the view of most modern philosophers. What additional sources of information do you imagine we have? Are you a Platonist? If your basic assumptions include some such source please set it forth, outline the ontology you have built upon it and demonstrate its explanatory power.

CHAPTER 2.16.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 12:47 AM

"The quest for the being of beings in its difference from being": "from being" takes the quote out of context and I would have to read the fuller text. His question is about being in the most foundational sense, not particular beings, as a chair or an eidtic entity like a set of numbers, but the question of being as such, when the predicative designations is put aside. Entities come replete predicatively bundled, so to speak, and there is no sense in the ideas of it being otherwise. But since philosophy's purpose is to provide an analytic at the most foundational level possible, and Being as such is this level, he begins here, but it is not with an eye to elucidate Being, the eternal essence of all things (why is there something rather than nothing, sort of thing), but rather to use this term to establish how far down the rabbit hole analysis can go and what this terminal place is.


Well, that response illustrates the problem. Phrases such as "being in the foundational sense," "being as such," and "eternal essences of all things" are meaningless phrases. The word "being" has two uses in English --- it is a noun denoting an existent, especially a living creature, and as a verb, the present participle of *to be* (to exist). There is no sense to "being as such" --- the term is only meaningful with reference to some particular existent. It does not denote some inchoate, mystical substance, some "essence," that permeates all tangible, perceptible things. Nor can any such mystical substances supply a foundation for any useful ontology. Speaking of "being" in that way does not constitute some revolutionary insight; it is merely a linguistic corruption contrived in an attempt to describe an incoherent idea.

So the quote SOUNDS absurd to anyone who has read nothing. It is always like this. Rorty calls those who talk like this (he thought Heidegger was among the three greatest philosophers of the 20th century) know nothings.

Scientists and analytic philosophers are "know-nothings"? Yikes.

CHAPTER 2.17.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 1:22 AM



GE Morton

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Read this to clarify (intended for TS)

Well, that response illustrates the problem. Phrases such as "being in the foundational sense," "being as such," and "eternal essences of all things" are meaningless phrases. The word "being"

has two uses in English --- it is a noun denoting an existent, especially a living creature, and as a verb, the present participle of to be (to exist). There is no sense to "being as such" --- the term is only meaningful with reference to some particular existent. It does not denote some inchoate, mystical substance, some "essence," that permeates all tangible, perceptible things. Nor can any such mystical substances supply a foundation for any useful ontology. Speaking of "being" in that way does not constitute some revolutionary insight; it is merely a linguistic corruption contrived in an attempt to describe an incoherent idea.

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Heidegger says at root, it is all interpretation. Now, his analysis of what an interpretative act IS requires looking into his thinking.

"Essences" only exist as rigid requirements in an individual's concepts. No essence as such would be "eternal." "Why is there something" is a rather silly question. There's no reason there should be nothing instead, so that it would be a mystery that there is something, and the question usually has a connotation almost of there being an intelligent reason behind the brute fact that things exist, which is also nonsense.

Right. Now I do recall saying to someone that phenomenologists are all different. There are those who take phenomenology another direction. When attention is placed on the interpretative act that engages the world, it brings philosophical attention to what is there, in the phenomenal act of recognition. This is why science plays no part in phenomenological analyses: Attention is on the act of perception, or apperception, itself. Studying the structure of time, the present and the literal "making" of our existence (hence Sartre's existence precedes essence: we make what we are in the fleeting "nothingness" of the present moment moving into the future) by freely choosing among the possibilities our history provides. We are, therefore, determined insofar as our past is made of the stuff of culture and language, a body of possibilities, but free in that the future is nothing, unmade.

One thing I like about this, is that it allows a good liberal like myself to look to social conditions as the cause of poverty and ignorance, after all, it is our history that determines our possibilities, but at the same time, does not undo the dignity of freedom (Skinner's term), for there is in this a clear

recognition of what it is to stand at the precipice of the future and choose one direction or another.

It does get interesting, believe it or not. Perhaps you can see why phenomenologists take special note of that moment what one stops simply acting as a kind of automaton, just doing this and that, getting a job, buying a house, and on and on, and wakes up to ask the question regarding Being: what does it mean to be here" Why am I here at all? Why are we born to suffer and die? And so on. Questions get quite poignant if you are among those born into nothing but suffering. Why IS it that things are like this? Heidegger thinks when you get to this juncture, you begin to realize your own freedom, as you stand apart from history that would otherwise simply move you along unconsciously. Only now are you free. Freedom requires one to step away from unconscious behavior. When you do this, you witness possibilities, as when I stop typing, look up and consider all things and why they are.

Then you find Jaspers' The Encompassing, Henry's Affectivity, Kierkegaard's existential Anxiety, Levinas' Infinity, and so forth. All terms alien to analytic philosophy's lexicon. Of course, derision is easy with kind of thing. It all does sound very weird. But this subsides with reading.

Scientists and analytic philosophers are "know-nothings"? Yikes.

Yikes is right. By no nothing, Rorty was referring to critics who never read Derrida and others yet were terrified of his conclusions. Not, heh, heh, critics of science.

But then, analytic philosophers really are barking up the wrong tree. This philosophy goes nowhere at all.

CHAPTER 2.18.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 1:25 AM



Terrapin Station wrote

Ontology isn't epistemology.

NOW might be getting it. Ontology IS epistemology. This is Heraclitus' world, not Parmenides'.

CHAPTER 2.19.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 2:04 AM

2.10. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

You can't find him doing this in his own words, which right away should ring alarm bells if you have any intellectual honesty and think accurately representing views you disagree with is essential to being a good scholar.


I mean, common sense alone should dictate that if he squabbles with people who openly call themselves eliminativists over their eliminativism, it's kind of stupid to call him one.

If anyone cares to read Dennet's "Quining Qualia" it is here:

[https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p ... inqual.htm](https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p...inqual.htm)

CHAPTER 2.20.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 2:18 AM



Sculptor1 wrote

But science is perfectly fit for the foundation of all knowledge; Just ask Locke Hume, and Newton, among many others.

I mean seriously. How can you claim to know anything without the empiric paradigm. It is the basis of all things.

There can be no ontology without the evidence that drives it.

Unless you want to sit in a dark cave and imagine the world you prefer to live in, you are basically stuck with EVIDENCE.

Just to be clear, I believe in the power of science over all things, with no exceptions save philosophical ontology. I will grant you that such a thing does require experience, but then, what IS experience? Does it have "parts" that can be abstracted and understood, like reason? It does, and so it is possible for a more basic level of analysis than empirical theory can provide.

One can have one's cake (say, evolution or climatology) and eat it, too (that is, keep it at bay for a more foundational ontology).

CHAPTER 2.21.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:02 AM

Wonder how a phenomenologist would deal with a severe psychosis, where for example he sees and hears things that aren't actually happening, and feels a rather overwhelming internal presence of some form of being that wasn't there previously, and so on.. is this also ontology?

CHAPTER 2.22.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:52 AM

2.19. by GE Morton

2.10. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

You can't find him doing this in his own words, which right away should ring alarm bells if you have any intellectual honesty and think accurately representing views you disagree with is essential to being a good scholar.

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If anyone cares to read Dennet's "Quining Qualia" it is here:

[https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p ... inqual.htm](https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p...inqual.htm)

I've tried reading that before, the experience proved pain exists.

CHAPTER 2.23.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:26 AM

It seems like your new tactic is that whatever our criticism is, you respond with "That's what Heidegger said!"



We could write, "Look, Heidegger was wrong. He simply didn't know what he was talking about, and he was a horrible writer." You'd respond with, "That's what Heidegger said!"

It's apparently the new "That's what she said."

CHAPTER 2.24.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:31 AM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.9. by Gertie

2.4. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

No, Dennett just thinks experiences don't have all the qualities that believers in qualia insist they do. He's more of a deflationist than an eliminativist.

What qualities does Dennett 'deflate' qualia to?

The soundbite would be "representational states of the nervous system".

CHAPTER 2.25.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:37 AM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.11. by  Hereandnow

The anti reductionism you are talking about is the resistance to a hasty reduction dismissing complexity.

No, he is literally anti-reductionist when it comes to mental states. I'm talking about "reductionsim" in the strict technical sense, the only sense that really matters in philosophy of science.

2.11. by  Hereandnow

I do note that I asked you for one philosopher you could think of as a counter example to my claim that empirical science had hegemony in analytic philosophy, and you give me dennett, who you say is, "empirical to the core." Interesting strategy.

I do note that the burden of proving your ridiculous claim was on you, to find a mainstream analytic philosopher who made the outrageous claim you attribute to analytic philosophy. You'll never be able to do this, so of course you try to change the subject.

CHAPTER 2.26.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:42 AM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.12. by Atla

The issue is not what he said, it's what he what didn't say.

When he says in plain English that he's not denying the existence of conscious experience, you don't get to claim that he denies conscious experience. End of story.

This is not rocket science.

CHAPTER 2.27.

~

Hereandnow on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 12:12 PM



Faustus5 wrote

No, he is literally anti-reductionist when it comes to mental states. I'm talking about "reductionsim" in the strict technical sense, the only sense that really matters in philosophy of science.

I good start. Now, SPEAK! What is your aversion to explicative language? You should, by now, have at least SOME sense of the issue at hand, and you appear to have a thought or two about reductionist talk, so put the two together and make an idea.

Try this:

Different accounts of scientific reduction have shaped debates about diverse topics including scientific unification, the relation between (folk-)psychology and neuroscience, the metaphysics of the mind, the status of biology vis à vis chemistry, and the relation between allegedly teleological explanations and causal explanations. Understanding the relevant notions is thus a prerequisite for understanding key issues in contemporary analytic philosophy

Now, where do YOU stand on this issue of, as you say, "the strict technical sense the only sense that really matters in philosophy of science" reductionism vis a vis the argument here you seem to have such an abundant of critical thinking on?

I just think you don't like to be called out on matters to defend your thinking. That's not good. If you can't defend an idea, then perhaps you should review whether it is justified for belief.

Surely someone who has read *The Mirror of Nature* twice and memorized Dennett can say more than, oh, that's nonsense.

CHAPTER 2.28.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 1:08 PM

2.26. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.12. by *Atla*

The issue is not what he said, it's what he what didn't say.

When he says in plain English that he's not denying the existence of conscious experience, you don't get to claim that he denies conscious experience. End of story.

This is not rocket science.

I said that he eliminated qualia, because that's what he did. You are bending the issue by calling it conscious experience, which can be interpreted more broadly.

CHAPTER 2.29.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 1:57 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.27. by *Hereandnow*

Now, where do YOU stand on this issue of, as you say, "the strict technical sense the only sense that really matters in philosophy of science" reductionism vis a vis the argument here you seem to have such an abundant of critical thinking on?

Reductionism is the attempt to reconcile and link two separate vocabularies or language-games which address some phenomenon in the natural world. In sound-bite form, reduction requires that you be able to transform one vocabulary into the other either through some sort of logical deduction or through systematic application of scientific “bridge” laws.

If you cannot do this, then while you can certainly claim (if the evidence supports it) that one vocabulary is talking about the same thing as the other but at a different level of analysis, you cannot claim that one reduces to the other. The two vocabularies have a sort of autonomy from one another.

That's reductionism. Dennett does not believe that mental states can be reduced in this way to brain states.

CHAPTER 2.30.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 2:01 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.28. by Atla

I said that he eliminated qualia, because that's what he did. You are bending the issue by calling it conscious experience, which can be interpreted more broadly.

You wrote yesterday that Dennett "does away with experience". That's what I was responding to, so if dragging "experience" into the discussion is "bending the issue", maybe you shouldn't have used that phrase in the first place.

Of course I agree that he does away with qualia. Where I believe we differ is that I see this as a wise move because qualia is philosophical BS.

CHAPTER 2.31.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 2:12 PM

2.24. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.9. by Gertie

*What qualities does Dennett 'deflate' qualia to?
The soundbite would be "representational states of the nervous system".*

And are these representational states of the nervous system phenomenally experienced by the nervous system, or are they themselves the phenomenal experience, or...?

CHAPTER 2.32.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 2:22 PM

2.30. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.28. by Atla

I said that he eliminated qualia, because that's what he did. You are bending the issue by calling it conscious experience, which can be interpreted more broadly.

You wrote yesterday that Dennett "does away with experience". That's what I was responding to, so if dragging "experience" into the discussion is "bending the issue", maybe you shouldn't have used that phrase in the first place.

Of course I agree that he does away with qualia. Where I believe we differ is that I see this as a wise move because qualia is philosophical BS.

Thanks for admitting it. Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

At this point I usually ask you eliminativists, to explain what magenta is, and how science detects it, or infers its existence from the behaviour of other things. After all, if science can't do that, then magenta is made-up, right, or some sort of 'illusion'? Would be too much off topic though so maybe we'll have that fun another time.

CHAPTER 2.33.

~

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:04 PM



2.32. by Atla

2.30. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

You wrote yesterday that Dennett "does away with experience". That's what I was responding to, so if dragging "experience" into the discussion is "bending the issue", maybe you shouldn't have used that phrase in the first place.

Of course I agree that he does away with qualia. Where I believe we differ is that I see this as a wise move because qualia is philosophical BS.

Thanks for admitting it. Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

At this point I usually ask you eliminativists, to explain what magenta is, and how science detects it, or infers its existence from the behaviour of other things. After all, if science can't do that, then magenta is made-up, right, or some sort of 'illusion'? Would be too much off topic though so maybe we'll have that fun another time.


Neither of you seem to appreciate what is meant by qualia. And if you think Dennett has dismissed the idea then he is also clueless.

CHAPTER 2.34.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:27 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*.  Evidence [here](#).

2.31. by Gertie

2.24. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

*The soundbite would be "representational states of the nervous system".
And are these representational states of the nervous system phenomenally experienced by the nervous system, or are they themselves the phenomenal experience, or...?*


B.

CHAPTER 2.35.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:32 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*.  Evidence [here](#).

2.32. by Atla


Thanks for admitting it. Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.[/quote]
If that were actually true, then you wouldn't have smart, well studied philosophers doubting that qualia exist. The existence of qualia appears to me to be a matter of religious faith among philosophers. And like "god" it apparently is so incoherent that even true believers can't seem to agree on what exactly they mean by using the term.

CHAPTER 2.36.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:40 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*.  Evidence [here](#).

2.32. by Atla

Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

Okay, I'll try this again. Really wish this forum had the ability to edit or delete posts when I make stupid formatting mistakes.

The fact of the matter is that there have been smart thinkers who have denied qualia in some form

or another for decades, so this claim of yours is just wrong as matter of absolute fact. You may be correct in the end that qualia exist, but that position is still being actively debated and you're in denial if you don't admit this.

The existence of qualia seems to be to be a sort of religious article of faith among some in the philosophical community. As with "God", even the true believers can't seem to agree with one another one what the term is supposed to mean.

CHAPTER 2.37.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:59 PM

2.30. *by Faustus5 (Dennett)*

Of course I agree that he does away with qualia. Where I believe we differ is that I see this as a wise move because qualia is philosophical BS.

2.32. *by Atla*

At this point I usually ask you eliminativists, to explain what magenta is, and how science detects it, or infers its existence from the behaviour of other things. After all, if science can't do that, then magenta is made-up, right, or some sort of 'illusion'? Would be too much off topic though so maybe we'll have that fun another time.

That qualia is not reducible to brain states or otherwise explicable in scientific terms does not relegate it to "philosophical BS." The term is reasonably well-defined and descriptively useful. But the existence of qualia doesn't imply dualism either. The challenge is to explain WHY it is not reducible. (Good explanation of reductionism earlier, Faustus).

There is no explanation of "what magenta is" to be had, Alta, via science or any other methodology. But since we can use that and other qualia terms to communicate actionable information it exists --- which is the only criterion for the existence of anything.

CHAPTER 2.38.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:10 PM



2.32. by Atla

2.30. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

You wrote yesterday that Dennett "does away with experience". That's what I was responding to, so if dragging "experience" into the discussion is "bending the issue", maybe you shouldn't have used that phrase in the first place.

Of course I agree that he does away with qualia. Where I believe we differ is that I see this as a wise move because qualia is philosophical BS.

Thanks for admitting it. Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

At this point I usually ask you eliminativists, to explain what magenta is, and how science detects it, or infers its existence from the behaviour of other things. After all, if science can't do that, then magenta is made-up, right, or some sort of 'illusion'? Would be too much off topic though so maybe we'll have that fun another time.

But I already explained how we explain what magenta is and how we detect it. It's no big mystery. Your objection was that it was somehow illegitimate to talk about something that's not a "single" phenomenon--in other words, magenta obtains via a combination of EM wavelengths (or we could talk about combinations of pigments that give off the combination of wavelengths, etc.)

CHAPTER 2.39.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:21 PM

2.38. by Terrapin Station

2.32. by Atla

Thanks for admitting it. Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

At this point I usually ask you eliminativists, to explain what magenta is, and how science detects it, or infers its existence from the behaviour of other things. After all, if science can't do that, then magenta is made-up, right, or some sort of 'illusion'? Would be too much off topic though so maybe we'll have that fun another time.

But I already explained how we explain what magenta is and how we detect it. It's no big mystery. Your objection was that it was somehow illegitimate to talk about something that's not a "single" phenomenon--in other words, magenta obtains via a combination of EM wavelengths (or we could talk about combinations of pigments that give off the combination of wavelengths, etc.)

And I told you to prove your idea via science, which of course you couldn't.

CHAPTER 2.40.

~



2.36. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.32. by *Atla*

Too bad that the existence of qualia can't be doubted.

Okay, I'll try this again. Really wish this forum had the ability to edit or delete posts when I make stupid formatting mistakes.

The fact of the matter is that there have been smart thinkers who have denied qualia in some form or another for decades, so this claim of yours is just wrong as matter of absolute fact. You may be correct in the end that qualia exist, but that position is still being actively debated and you're in denial if you don't admit this.

The existence of qualia seems to be to be a sort of religious article of faith among some in the philosophical community. As with "God", even the true believers can't seem to agree with one another one what the term is supposed to mean.

I don't know if we talked about this before. I buy that there are qualia, and I've always found the rejection of qualia curious. There's nothing mysterious about qualia. Qualia are simply the qualitative properties of mental brain states, from the perspective of those mental brain states. When the brain states are perceptual states, there's often no good reason to believe that the qualitative properties of the correlative brain states are much different, qualitatively, than the qualitative properties of the objective materials/relations/processes that we're perceiving. (Sometimes there are reasons to believe that there would be a difference, but we need good evidence for that, and it requires that we're able to tell what the externals are really like contra the perceptual content.)

All materials/relations/processes "have" qualities, of course--qualities simply being properties or characteristics of existents (including in whatever dynamic or relational state they're in). "Qualia" is simply the term for these properties when we're talking about mental brain states, from the perspective of those mental brain states. It wouldn't make any sense to say that mental brain states (or anything else for that matter) have no properties.

CHAPTER 2.41.

~



2.39. by Atla

2.38. by Terrapin Station

But I already explained how we explain what magenta is and how we detect it. It's no big mystery. Your objection was that it was somehow illegitimate to talk about something that's not a "single" phenomenon--in other words, magenta obtains via a combination of EM wavelengths (or we could talk about combinations of pigments that give off the combination of wavelengths, etc.)

And I told you to prove your idea via science, which of course you couldn't.

No empirical claim is provable. If you want reasons to believe it, which is different than a proof, then that's simple enough. Reasons to believe it include (a) the definition of "magenta," (b) knowledge that colors obtain via wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation (and subjectively, what the perception of those wavelengths is like from the perspective of being the brain states in question), (c) knowledge that some colors are the result of additive properties of electromagnetic waves, sometimes at different intensities, etc., (d) knowledge of how materials reflect electromagnetic radiation--materials such as pigments in paints or pixels on a computer screen, etc. What's supposed to be the big mystery there?

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 2 .

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:36 PM

2.41. by Terrapin Station

2.39. by Atla

And I told you to prove your idea via science, which of course you couldn't.

No empirical claim is provable. If you want reasons to believe it, which is different than a proof, then that's simple enough. Reasons to believe it include (a) the definition of "magenta," (b) knowledge that colors obtain via wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation (and subjectively, what the perception of those wavelengths is like from the perspective of being the brain states in question), (c) knowledge that some colors are the result of additive properties of electromagnetic waves, sometimes at different intensities, etc., (d) knowledge of how materials reflect electromagnetic radiation--materials such as pigments in paints or pixels on a computer screen, etc. What's supposed to be the big mystery there?

The mystery here is why you are so ignorant about both science and philosophy. You don't even understand the problem. Again, (b) and (c) are your guesses but you can't show them via science. That's why I told you to prove them if you can.

(Evasion tactics about how you can't interpret 'proof' in a scientific context, does not solve the issue by the way.)

CHAPTER 2.43.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:45 PM

2.34. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.31. by Gertie

And are these representational states of the nervous system phenomenally experienced by the nervous system, or are they themselves the phenomenal experience, or...?

B.

So the claim is that that qualia are phenomenal experience, and a property of brain processes? That's a pretty mainstream idea.

Isn't the reduction then simply a framing which says it's not qualia doing the representing of a blue sky, it's the configurations of and interactions of the nervous system in response to external stimuli? And the phenomenal experience is just a property of how those particular processes manifest?

I don't see that as reduction, or particularly significant, more a shift in identifying where the representational function in the process happens.

I don't see how it makes qualia somehow illusory either?

CHAPTER 2.44.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:46 PM

Read this to clarify (intended for TS)

Well, that response illustrates the problem. Phrases such as "being in the foundational sense," "being as such," and "eternal essences of all things" are meaningless phrases. The word "being" has two uses in English --- it is a noun denoting an existent, especially a living creature, and as a verb, the present participle of to be (to exist). There is no sense to "being as such" --- the term is only meaningful with reference to some particular existent. It does not denote some inchoate, mystical substance, some "essence," that permeates all tangible, perceptible things. Nor can any such mystical substances supply a foundation for any useful ontology. Speaking of "being" in that way does not constitute some revolutionary insight; it is merely a linguistic corruption contrived in an attempt to describe an incoherent idea.

That's what Heidegger said (as well as Husserl. A thing is an "predicatively formed affair of actuality"). He takes Being as such as a badly misunderstood concept. These mysterious intuitions, he said, one might have of Being are what he is trying to give some articulation to. He thinks we have to understand Being as a foundational concept in an analytic of Time: I approach a thing, it IS there. What is it that constitutes this awareness of the thing before me? It is not some pure intimation of Being, for, as you say above, no sense can be made of this. He sees that before I even approach the thing, I am equipped with the ability to acknowledge it AS something, some reference to language, a foreknowledge of what couches and chairs ARE before we can analyze what it means that things ARE. The areness, if you will, is bound, in every case, always, already, bound to the pre understanding, so the question of what it means for something to be is analyzable to the temporal conditions that are in place in order for a "there is" or a "I am" to occur at all. this is why Heidegger's ontology is as foundational as it can get: wher a scientific account is about planets and chromosomes, the phenomenological ontology is about what it is for a thing to be at all, so that when you approach the microscope, there is a constitution, if you like, a paradigmatically informed apperceptive constitution that makes encounters at all maningful, and thus,the scientist's work meaningful.

That is supposed to "clarify" the meaning of "Being as such"? You seem to be agreeing that "no sense can be made" of that, then proceed to divert to a discussion of the ability we have to perceive or recognize things --- neither of which has anything to do with "being," as that term is normally understood. From there we get:

"The areness, if you will, is bound, in every case, always, already, bound to the pre understanding, so the question of what it means for something to be is analyzable to the temporal conditions that are in place in order for a "there is" or a "I am" to occur at all."


"Areness"? Is that some sort of synonym for "being as such"? You're just piling more gobbledygook on top of the previous gobbledygook. What it "means to be" is not "analyzable" at all; no analysis of that concept is necessary. It is a simple term, used to distinguish perceptible, tangible, cognizable denotata of terms from imaginary, fictitious, hypothetical, etc., ones. It is among the simplest, least problematic terms in the English lexicon.

"Analyzable to the temporal conditions that are in place"? Are you stating or implying that whatever exists, exists in some time and place? That is not true. Many things exist which have no spatio-temporal coordinates, e.g., numbers, love, beauty --- the things denoted by most other abstract terms. They exist if the terms denoting them have descriptive, explanatory, communicative utility.

You're trying to "reify" a verb used to mark a simple distinction into some sort of ethereal, mysterious substance --- conjuring up a problem where there is none.

CHAPTER 2.45.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 4:48 PM



2.42. by Atla

2.41. by Terrapin Station

No empirical claim is provable. If you want reasons to believe it, which is different than a proof, then that's simple enough. Reasons to believe it include (a) the definition of "magenta," (b) knowledge that colors obtain via wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation (and subjectively, what the perception of those wavelengths is like from the perspective of being the brain states in question), (c) knowledge that some colors are the result of additive properties of electromagnetic waves, sometimes at different intensities, etc., (d) knowledge of how materials reflect electromagnetic radiation--materials such as pigments in paints or pixels on a computer screen, etc. What's supposed to be the big mystery there?

The mystery here is why you are so ignorant about both science and philosophy. You don't even understand the problem. Again, (b) and (c) are your guesses but you can't show them via science. That's why I told you to prove them if you can.

(Evasion tactics about how you can't interpret 'proof' in a scientific context, does not solve the issue by the way.)

Again (and again and again and again . . .) no one can prove any empirical claim, period. For any empirical claim, the contradictory empirical claim is always a possibility. What you should focus on instead are reasons to believe one possibility over another.

(b) is very easy to show re having a good reason to believe it. For one, we can produce different frequencies of electromagnetic radiation, expose people to them, and very predictably receive responses about what color the person is being exposed to.

Re (c) we do this all the time when we mix paints, for example. We can easily use a spectrometer to show what EM frequencies a particular paint blob is giving off. We can easily see what color the paint blob is. And then we very reliably know what colors we'll get when we mix different paints, and we can use spectrometers on those too.

It's ridiculous that I have to explain any of this to you, and it's typical that rather than offer any sorts of counterargument whatsoever, rather than attempting to explain what's supposed to be so mysterious about something like magenta, you resort to stupid insults. That's all you're really capable of. Because you're an insecure moron.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:07 PM



2.42. by Atla

Re magenta, by the way, what the hell are you even thinking? That it's just some *random* quale that people have that's otherwise inexplicable? Are you not thinking that it's reliably in response to objective facts? That it's not a reliable perception of objective properties? How would you explain being able to reliably print things (for example) that people perceive as magenta? Seriously, it seems like I'd be talking to a retard to have to even explain this.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:16 PM

2.45. by Terrapin Station

2.42. by Atla

The mystery here is why you are so ignorant about both science and philosophy. You don't even understand the problem. Again, (b) and (c) are your guesses but you can't show them via science. That's why I told you to prove them if you can.

(Evasion tactics about how you can't interpret 'proof' in a scientific context, does not solve the issue by the way.)

Again (and again and again and again . . .) no one can prove any empirical claim, period. For any empirical claim, the contradictory empirical claim is always a possibility. What you should focus on instead are reasons to believe one possibility over another.

(b) is very easy to show re having a good reason to believe it. For one, we can produce different frequencies of electromagnetic radiation, expose people to them, and very predictably receive responses about what color the person is being exposed to.

Re (c) we do this all the time when we mix paints, for example. We can easily use a spectrometer to show what EM frequencies a particular paint blob is giving off. We can easily see what color the paint blob is. And then we very reliably know what colors we'll get when we mix different paints, and we can use spectrometers on those too.

It's ridiculous that I have to explain any of this to you, and it's typical that rather than offer any sorts of counterargument whatsoever, rather than attempting to explain what's supposed to be so mysterious about something like magenta, you resort to stupid insults. That's all you're really capable of. Because you're an insecure moron.

Scientific proof doesn't work via 'what people say', it works by objective observation, measurement. As a physicalist, have you never heard of physics before?

CHAPTER 2.48.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:30 PM

2.43. by Gertie

So the claim is that that qualia are phenomenal experience, and a property of brain processes? That's a pretty mainstream idea.

That would be misleading. Qualia are not *properties* of brain processes, but *products* of brain processes.

Isn't the reduction then simply a framing which says it's not qualia doing the representing of a blue sky, it's the configurations of and interactions of the nervous system in response to external stimuli? And the phenomenal experience is just a property of how those particular processes manifest?

That is, in my view, the proper way to conceive of qualia --- as the mode by which the brain presents to consciousness information about the wavelengths of light the senses are delivering to it. A quale is an experiential "tag" that allows us to distinguish (say) red light from light with different wavelengths. Each one represents some experiential differertia. We can think of those tags as arbitrary; they bear no predictable or necessary logical or structural relationship to the physical processes that produce them (just as words for things are arbitrary, having no structural or other physical relationships to the things they name). Qualia terms are also unanalyzable and thus ineffable --- they are linguistic primitives, with no simpler parts or distinguishable properties. Hence they cannot be described (description consists in listing the properties of things). They are also intrinsically subjective --- there is no way for me to know whether the sensation you experience when seeing red is the same as mine --- that question doesn't even make sense.

In Frank Jackson's "Mary" thought experiment, Jackson asks whether Mary, who has lived her life in a black-and-white room and never perceived color, but knows all the science there is to know about light, learns anything new when she perceives a red rose for the first time. Yes, she does --- not anything new about the world, but how her brain presents that wavelength information to her consciousness.

Every conscious creature knows that qualia are "real" enough. We just have to accept that, for the reasons above, they are unanalyzable, and, more importantly, that there is no need to analyze them.

~

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:32 PM

2.46. by Terrapin Station

2.42. by Atla

Re magenta, by the way, what the hell are you even thinking? That it's just some random quale that people have that's otherwise inexplicable? Are you not thinking that it's reliably in response to objective facts? That it's not a reliable perception of objective properties? How would you explain being able to reliably print things (for example) that people perceive as magenta? Seriously, it seems like I'd be talking to a retard to have to even explain this.

Maybe you can answer this.

I'm watching this Dennett video. **At 12:40 minutes** they get on to "qualia".

To versions of colour perception are set on for blue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSaEjLZIDqc>

1 Having a phenomenal quality of blue instantiated in my brain.

and

2 The quality of blue is represented by my brain.

Dennett claims that 1 is wrong and that 2 is correct.

For my money the idea of a qualia seems right. Others on this Forum page have claimed that Dennett has ejected the notion as crap.

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:37 PM

2.48. by GE Morton

That is, in my view, the proper way to conceive of qualia --- as the mode by which the brain presents to consciousness information about the wavelengths of light the senses are delivering to it. A quale is an experiential "tag" that allows us to distinguish (say) red light from light with different wavelengths. Each one represents some experiential differentia. We can think of those tags as arbitrary; they bear no predictable or necessary logical or structural relationship to the physical processes that produce them (just as words for things are arbitrary, having no structural or other physical relationships to the things they name). Qualia terms are also unanalyzable and thus ineffable --- they are linguistic primitives, with no simpler parts or distinguishable properties. Hence they cannot be described (description consists in listing the properties of things). They are also intrinsically subjective --- there is no way for me to know whether the sensation you experience when seeing red is the same as mine --- that question doesn't even make sense.

In Frank Jackson's "Mary" thought experiment, Jackson asks whether Mary, who has lived her life in a black-and-white room and never perceived color, but knows all the science there is to know about light, learns anything new when she perceives a red rose for the first time. Yes, she does --- not anything new about the world, but how her brain presents that wavelength information to her consciousness.

Every conscious creature knows that qualia are "real" enough. We just have to accept that, for the reasons above, they are unanalyzable, and, more importantly, that there is no need to analyze them.

That's not good enough. If 'magenta' occurs inside brains, then it should occur outside brains as well.

CHAPTER 2.51.

~

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:38 PM



2.48. by GE Morton

In Frank Jackson's "Mary" thought experiment, Jackson asks whether Mary, who has lived her life in a black-and-white room and never perceived color, but knows all the science there is to know about light, learns anything new when she perceives a red rose for the first time. Yes, she does --- not anything new about the world, but how her brain presents that wavelength information to her consciousness.

Every conscious creature knows that qualia are "real" enough. We just have to accept that, for the reasons above, they are unanalyzable, and, more importantly, that there is no need to analyze them.

Clearly when Mary emerges from her monochrome existence and apprehends a collection of colourful children's building blocks there is no way by basic perception that she has any way of knowing which colour is which. Whatever her brain now "sees" or "produces" in the perceived representation of the colours she now sees for the first time; they are wholly unknowable until someone nominates those colours for her.

It is this new knowledge where the "qualia" exist.

So is there any argument against this?

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:41 PM

2.50. by Atla

2.48. by GE Morton

That is, in my view, the proper way to conceive of qualia --- as the mode by which the brain presents to consciousness information about the wavelengths of light the senses are delivering to it. A quale is an experiential "tag" that allows us to distinguish (say) red light from light with different wavelengths. Each one represents some experiential differertia. We can think of those tags as arbitrary; they bear no predictable or necessary logical or structural relationship to the physical processes that produce them (just as words for things are arbitrary, having no structural or other physical relationships to the things they name). Qualia terms are also unanalyzable and thus ineffable --- they are linguistic primitives, with no simpler parts or distinguishable properties. Hence they cannot be described (description consists in listing the properties of things). They are also intrinsically subjective --- there is no way for me to know whether the sensation you experience when seeing red is the same as mine --- that question doesn't even make sense.

In Frank Jackson's "Mary" thought experiment, Jackson asks whether Mary, who has lived her life in a black-and-white room and never perceived color, but knows all the science there is to know about light, learns anything new when she perceives a red rose for the first time. Yes, she does --- not anything new about the world, but how her brain presents that wavelength information to her consciousness.

Every conscious creature knows that qualia are "real" enough. We just have to accept that, for the reasons above, they are unanalyzable, and, more importantly, that there is no need to analyze them.

That's not good enough. If 'magenta' occurs inside brains, then it should occur outside brains as well.

No.

To a person in the Monochrome room magenta is defined as what happens when you mix pure blue and pure red light. (unlike paint which is subtractive, adding light together is additive).

Unless she has previously seen magenta, the light emitted from a object of that wavelength is just that - light emitted from a wavelength.

Magenta can only happen in representations in the perception.

If you don't understand where this is coming from then you need to look at the thought experiment in detail.

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:59 PM

2.50. by Atla

That's not good enough. If 'magenta' occurs inside brains, then it should occur outside brains as well.

Magenta (the color) does indeed exist outside brains. But the unique phenomenal experience you have when perceiving it exists only in your brain. The term "qualia" refers to that experience, not a color.

CHAPTER 2.54.

~

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:01 PM



2.53. by GE Morton

2.50. by Atla

That's not good enough. If 'magenta' occurs inside brains, then it should occur outside brains as well.

Magenta (the color) does indeed exist outside brains. But the unique phenomenal experience you have when perceiving it exists only in your brain. The term "qualia" refers to that experience, not a color.

Colour is only meaningful to and of the subject.

It's like you know the Mary experiment and have not learned its lesson.

CHAPTER 2.55.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:05 PM

2.51. by Sculptor1

Clearly when Mary emerges from her monochrome existence and apprehends a collection of colourful children's building blocks there is no way by basic perception that she has any way of knowing which colour is which. Whatever her brain now "sees" or "produces" in the perceived representation of the colours she now sees for the first time; they are wholly unknowable until someone nominates those colours for her.

I agree. She will not know what terms are used for which colors until someone tells her.

CHAPTER 2.56.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:07 PM

2.53. by GE Morton

2.50. by Atla

That's not good enough. If 'magenta' occurs inside brains, then it should occur outside brains as well.

Magenta (the color) does indeed exist outside brains. But the unique phenomenal experience you have when perceiving it exists only in your brain. The term "qualia" refers to that experience, not a color.

Magenta itself is a qualia too. And science can't detect it for two different reasons, that's why I like to use this example. And the standard view is that if you can't detect it, it doesn't exist.

CHAPTER 2.57.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:11 PM

2.49. by Sculptor1

- 1 Having a phenomenal quality of blue instantiated in my brain.
- and
- 2 The quality of blue is represented by my brain.

Dennett claims that 1 is wrong and that 2 is correct.

For my money the idea of a qualia seems right. Others on this Forum page have claimed that Dennett has ejected the notion as crap.

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

#1 seems to presume that there is a "phenomenal quality of blueness" that is somehow independent of the perceiving subject (*a la* Chalmers).

What Dennett rejects is that understanding of "qualia."

CHAPTER 2.58.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:15 PM

2.56. by Atla

Magenta itself is a qualia too.

No, it isn't. "magenta" is a name for a range of wavelengths that produce specific qualia in perceiving subjects.

CHAPTER 2.59.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:18 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.37. by GE Morton

78 user_id=48013]

The term is reasonably well-defined and descriptively useful.

Is it, though?

I remember one hilarious talk Dennett gave where he illustrated change blindness to an audience. (Two images which appear to be identical are flashed repeatedly over and over. There is a change from one to the other but it takes several repetitions before a subject will consciously perceive it. He proceeded until everyone verified they had noticed the change from one slide to the other.)

He asked the audience what (to me, anyway) should have been a simple question for which the answer should be obvious and unanimously reached: "Were your qualia changing during the experiment?" Some people raised their hands, some people didn't.

Seems to me that if qualia were really well defined there should have been no disagreement. I mean after all, if qualia really exist and are the most obvious thing in the world, how could some people think their qualia were changing and others not? This disagreement and confusion pretty clearly indicate to me that qualia are a thoroughly theoretical construct.

2.37. by GE Morton

78 user_id=48013]The challenge is to explain WHY it is not reducible. (Good explanation of reductionism earlier, Faustus).

Thanks, and I think I have an answer. With reference to the definition of reduction I gave earlier, you can't take the vocabulary of mental state talk and transform its terms into the vocabulary of neurology talk, neither through logical deduction nor through scientific "bridge laws".

This is no big deal and does not call for metaphysical extravagance where we think we need to add phenomenal properties to the list of physical properties found in the natural world.

CHAPTER 2.60.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:25 PM

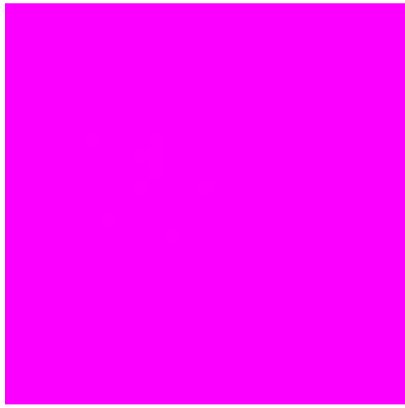
2.58. by GE Morton

2.56. by Atla

Magenta itself is a qualia too.

No, it isn't. "magenta" is a name for a range of wavelengths that produce specific qualia in perceiving subjects.

So is this:



just a name?

CHAPTER 2.61.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:27 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.43. by Gertie

So the claim is that that qualia are phenomenal experience, and a property of brain processes? That's a pretty mainstream idea.

Well, I don't want to talk about qualia at all. I want to say that there are brain processes and brain properties and that's it. When we talk about what they are like we use a set of language games that involve reference to mental and phenomenal states when ultimately what we are talking about are brain states, although until recently we didn't know that's what we were doing.

I'm sure almost no one here agrees with me, I'm just outlining the position you get to if you agree with the model of consciousness Dennett has been championing since *Consciousness Explained*, which I thoroughly do on most points.

One of these days I'm going to start a thread about his concept of heterophenomenology, which I think is in chapter three or four. It's supposed to lay out a supposedly neutral starting point where

everyone, believers in qualia or not, should be able to agree upon when gathering the data a theory of consciousness is supposed to explain.

CHAPTER 2.62.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:39 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.49. by Sculptor1

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

I haven't seen that video in a long time (if I saw it at all), but given what he's said in the past during other presentations which involved the ontology of after-images, if there is no blue colored thing anywhere in your brain, but just a brain state representing the color and shape of a blue object, there is nothing fitting the concept of #1 that exists.

Qualia as many understand them would be in addition to the brain state, something which somehow mysteriously exists, but even though non-physical is still not supposed to suggest dualism.

Another way I like to think about qualia is that if you think a David Chalmers zombie makes sense in any form, what it has are qualia, and if you don't, you don't believe in qualia.

CHAPTER 2.63.

~

Gertie on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 7:22 PM

GE

Thank you for taking the time to do this.

I have questions!

*So the claim is that that qualia are phenomenal experience, and a property of brain processes?
That's a pretty mainstream idea.*

That would be misleading. Qualia are not properties of brain processes, but products of brain processes.

Could you clarify how the difference works here?

Isn't the reduction then simply a framing which says it's not qualia doing the representing of a blue sky, it's the configurations of and interactions of the nervous system in response to external stimuli? And the phenomenal experience is just a property of how those particular processes manifest?

That is, in my view, the proper way to conceive of qualia --- as the mode by which the brain presents to consciousness information about the wavelengths of light the senses are delivering to it.

Just to agree some terms - would you go with qualia are akin to units of certain types phenomenal experience like sensory perceptions, emotions and sensations? Or all 'what it's like' experience?

And what do you mean by 'consciousness' here, which the brain 'presents phenomenal experience' to? Other types of experiential states, a self which is something different to experiential states, or something else?

My own view is a conscious Self is no more than a feature of the way experiential states (qualia, intentional states, whatever) manifest in complex conscious beings - hence the question

A quale is an experiential "tag" that allows us to distinguish (say) red light from light with different wavelengths.

Again, what is the 'us' or Me here doing the distinguishing?

Each one represents some experiential differertia. We can think of those tags as arbitrary; they bear no predictable or necessary logical or structural relationship to the physical processes that produce them (just as words for things are arbitrary, having no structural or other physical relationships to the things they name).

If I'm reading you correctly, you're saying Dennett believes it's arbitrary that sticking my hand in a fire feels bad, and eating when I'm low on calories feels good? It could just as easily be the other way round? Because our reward system looks a lot like it's tuned by evolution.

Qualia terms are also unanalyzable and thus ineffable --- they are linguistic primitives, with no simpler parts or distinguishable properties. Hence they cannot be described (description consists in listing the properties of things).

Umm OK. I'd thought Dennett disputed their ineffability.

They are also intrinsically subjective --- there is no way for me to know whether the sensation you experience when seeing red is the same as mine --- that question doesn't even make sense.

Right it is unknowable, but the claim the question doesn't make sense implies a whole lot more.

In Frank Jackson's "Mary" thought experiment, Jackson asks whether Mary, who has lived her life in a black-and-white room and never perceived color, but knows all the science there is to know about light, learns anything new when she perceives a red rose for the first time. Yes, she does --- not anything new about the world, but how her brain presents that wavelength information to her consciousness.


I recall Dennett disputing Jackson's knowledge argument, but all I remember now is a banana - and that might not have been him lol. That makes sense I guess, if you think consciousness consists of something other than experiential states manifesting in different ways.

Every conscious creature knows that qualia are "real" enough. We just have to accept that, for the reasons above, they are unanalyzable, and, more importantly, that there is no need to analyze them.

Heh.

CHAPTER 2.64.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 7:48 PM



2.47. by Atla

2.45. by Terrapin Station

Again (and again and again and again . . .) no one can prove any empirical claim, period. For any empirical claim, the contradictory empirical claim is always a possibility. What you should focus on instead are reasons to believe one possibility over another.

(b) is very easy to show re having a good reason to believe it. For one, we can produce different frequencies of electromagnetic radiation, expose people to them, and very predictably receive responses about what color the person is being exposed to.

Re (c) we do this all the time when we mix paints, for example. We can easily use a spectrometer to show what EM frequencies a particular paint blob is giving off. We can easily see what color the paint blob is. And then we very reliably know what colors we'll get when we mix different paints, and we can use spectrometers on those too.

It's ridiculous that I have to explain any of this to you, and it's typical that rather than offer any sorts of counterargument whatsoever, rather than attempting to explain what's supposed to be so mysterious about something like magenta, you resort to stupid insults. That's all you're really capable of. Because you're an insecure moron.

Scientific proof doesn't work via 'what people say', it works by objective observation, measurement. As a physicalist, have you never heard of physics before?

Science doesn't prove anything. It provisionally verifies them in lieu of falsification. Have you never heard of science methodology or philosophy of science before?



Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 7:55 PM



2.49. by Sculptor1

2.46. by Terrapin Station

Re magenta, by the way, what the hell are you even thinking? That it's just some random quale that people have that's otherwise inexplicable? Are you not thinking that it's reliably in response to objective facts? That it's not a reliable perception of objective properties? How would you explain being able to reliably print things (for example) that people perceive as magenta? Seriously, it seems like I'd be talking to a retard to have to even explain this.

Maybe you can answer this.

I'm watching this Dennett video. At 12:40 minutes they get on to "qualia".

To versions of colour perception are set on for blue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSaEjLZIDqc>

1 Having a phenomenal quality of blue instantiated in my brain.

and

2 The quality of blue is represented by my brain.

Dennett claims that 1 is wrong and that 2 is correct.

For my money the idea of a qualia seems right. Others on this Forum page have claimed that Dennett has ejected the notion as crap.

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

Dennett simply means that there's no literal instantiation of blue in your brain, and no literal door. In other words, the color blue won't literally be found in your brain and neither will a door. You rather have a "representation" of blue and the door in your brain. It's kind of like how the color blue isn't literally in the word "blue," but the word (at least with semantic aspects "attached") is a representation of the color.



Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 7:58 PM



2.60. by Atla

2.58. by GE Morton

No, it isn't. "magenta" is a name for a range of wavelengths that produce specific qualia in perceiving subjects.

So is this:



just a name?

He wrote that it's a name *for a range of wavelengths*. He didn't write that it's just a name <stop>

CHAPTER 2.67.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:01 PM



That would be misleading. Qualia are not properties of brain processes, but products of brain processes.

I don't agree with that. Qualia are properties of mental brain states. They're not something different than mental brain states that the brain only produces.

That is, in my view, the proper way to conceive of qualia --- as the mode by which the brain presents to consciousness

As if brains and consciousness are something different. They're not.

CHAPTER 2.68.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:01 PM

2.64. by Terrapin Station

2.47. by Atla

*Scientific proof doesn't work via 'what people say', it works by objective observation, measurement. As a physicalist, have you never heard of physics before?
Science doesn't prove anything. It provisionally verifies them in lieu of falsification. Have you never heard of science methodology or philosophy of science before?*

Empirical proof is a commonly used term, I already told you like 5 times that I'm not interested in the childish evasion tactics where you pretend to not understand what it means.

Although I suppose it's possible that you really don't know what it means. After all, you also didn't know that science deals with objective measurement. And we've also established prior that you missed like the entirety of 20th century scientific development, that was relevant to philosophy.

In short, you have an almost Flat-Earther level understanding of the physicalism you think you subscribe to. That would explain why you are so confused, but think that others are confused.

CHAPTER 2.69.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:05 PM

2.66. by Terrapin Station

2.60. by Atla

So is this:



just a name?

He wrote that it's a name for a range of wavelengths. He didn't write that it's just a name <stop>

Maybe, maybe not. Magenta doesn't even have a known wavelength btw.

CHAPTER 2.70.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:06 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🗨️ Evidence [here](#).

2.65. by Terrapin Station

It's kind of like how the color blue isn't literally in the word "blue," but the word (at least with semantic aspects "attached") is a representation of the color.

That is a great way of putting it!

CHAPTER 2.71.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:07 PM



2.59. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Seems to me that if qualia were really well defined there should have been no disagreement. I mean after all, if qualia really exist and are the most obvious thing in the world, how could some people think their qualia were changing and others not? This disagreement and confusion pretty clearly indicate to me that qualia are a thoroughly theoretical construct.

One issue here would be if people believe that they can have unconscious mental content, and whether unconscious mental content have qualia.

So, for example, they might think, "I have unconscious mental content, but I understand the 'what it's like' idea to refer to something I'm necessarily aware of, so I'm not sure how to answer."

Or in my case, I don't agree that there's any good reason to buy that there is unconscious mental content.

But then someone else might think that they have unconscious mental content and that their unconscious mental content necessarily have qualia, too.

So the problem wouldn't be that qualia are necessarily unclear. It could be that people have different views about and/or aren't sure about unconscious mental content or its relation to qualia.

CHAPTER 2.72.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:09 PM



2.69. by Atla

2.66. by Terrapin Station

He wrote that it's a name for a range of wavelengths. He didn't write that it's just a name <stop> Maybe, maybe not. Magenta doesn't even have a known wavelength btw.

It's not a "single wavelength." It's a combo of wavelengths. Why would a combo be illegitimate?

You might as well say that there's no scientific account of musical harmony or a chord. Musical harmony/chords are by definition not just one pitch. They're a combination of pitches. Is it illegitimate to talk about a combination of musical pitches? Why would it be illegitimate to talk about combinations of EM frequencies?

CHAPTER 2.73.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 8:14 PM

2.72. by Terrapin Station

2.69. by Atla

Maybe, maybe not. Magenta doesn't even have a known wavelength btw.

It's not a "single wavelength." It's a combo of wavelengths. Why would a combo be illegitimate?

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Again, I don't care about the new physics you keep inventing, where two different things are identical to a third single thing. Prove it.

CHAPTER 2.74.

~

Gertie on  Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 9:16 PM

2.49. by Sculptor1

2.46. by Terrapin Station

Re magenta, by the way, what the hell are you even thinking? That it's just some random quale that people have that's otherwise inexplicable? Are you not thinking that it's reliably in response to objective facts? That it's not a reliable perception of objective properties? How would you explain being able to reliably print things (for example) that people perceive as magenta? Seriously, it seems like I'd be talking to a retard to have to even explain this.

Maybe you can answer this.

I'm watching this Dennett video. At 12:40 minutes they get on to "qualia".

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and

2 The quality of blue is represented by my brain.

Dennett claims that 1 is wrong and that 2 is correct.

For my money the idea of a qualia seems right. Others on this Forum page have claimed that Dennett has ejected the notion as crap.

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

When Dennett says blue is represented by my brain, all I think he's saying is that the the neural interactions resulting from patterns of photons (which we call blue) are the "representation" of blue.

So blue is represented by different neurons firing to those that fire for red, or an itchy toe, etc.

I think he's just saying the physical processes are what's doing the "representaion" function.

He's not talking about the experience of seeing blue, only to say he doesn't label the experiencing part the representational part (as some do). He labels the physical processes the functional representation process.

It's not saying much imo. And the interviewer didn't help clarify that. But I could have misunderstood.

CHAPTER 2.75.

~

2.73. by Atla



2.72. by Terrapin Station

It's not a "single wavelength." It's a combo of wavelengths. Why would a combo be illegitimate?

You might as well say that there's no scientific account of musical harmony or a chord. Musical harmony/chords are by definition not just one pitch. They're a combination of pitches. Is it illegitimate to talk about a combination of musical pitches? Why would it be illegitimate to talk about combinations of EM frequencies?

Again, I don't care about the new physics you keep inventing, where two different things are identical to a third single thing. Prove it.

Wait--you don't buy that chords consist of multiple pitches? hahahaha

CHAPTER 2.76.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:49 PM

2.60. by Atla

2.58. by GE Morton

No, it isn't. "magenta" is a name for a range of wavelengths that produce specific qualia in perceiving subjects.

So is this:



just a name?

No. That is a magenta square. "Magenta" is the name for the wavelengths of light reflected or emitted by that square. The qualia is whatever distinctive experiential state is induced in your mind when your nervous system detects light of those wavelengths, that informs you that light of those wavelengths is now stimulating your nervous system.



GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:32 AM

2.59. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.37. by GE Morton

78 user_id=48013]

The term is reasonably well-defined and descriptively useful.

Is it, though?

I remember one hilarious talk Dennett gave where he illustrated change blindness to an audience. (Two images which appear to be identical are flashed repeatedly over and over. There is a change from one to the other but it takes several repetitions before a subject will consciously perceive it. He proceeded until everyone verified they had noticed the change from one slide to the other.)

He asked the audience what (to me, anyway) should have been a simple question for which the answer should be obvious and unanimously reached: "Were your qualia changing during the experiment?" Some people raised their hands, some people didn't.

Seems to me that if qualia were really well defined there should have been no disagreement. I mean after all, if qualia really exist and are the most obvious thing in the world, how could some people think their qualia were changing and others not? This disagreement and confusion pretty clearly indicate to me that qualia are a thoroughly theoretical construct.

Ooops, mistake. "Qualia" is well-defined --- they are the specific, distinctive, phenomenal states you experience when presented with various stimuli (via internal or external sensors). But no particular quale is well-defined --- they are not definable at all. We may fairly assume everyone experiences qualia, as above defined, else they would not be able to distinguish red from blue, or the smell of ammonia from the smell of cinnamon. But we have no idea what the quale for ammonia is, or is like, for anyone but ourselves, and we will only know what it is for ourselves by experiencing it --- no one can tell us in advance.

The Dennett problem you pose, BTW, is confounded by the problem of attention. We often judge two slightly different things to be the same, on first glance. The problem is not that the quales for those two things changed; it is that the small differences between them were ignored (at first glance). If the two things are perceptibly different, after "careful inspection," then their quales were always different too --- the difference just wasn't noticed, or attended to.

Thanks, and I think I have an answer. With reference to the definition of reduction I gave earlier, you can't take the vocabulary of mental state talk and transform its terms into the vocabulary of neurology talk, neither through logical deduction nor through scientific "bridge laws".


I agree.

This is no big deal and does not call for metaphysical extravagance where we think we need to add phenomenal properties to the list of physical properties found in the natural world.

I agree there too. There are no "phenomenal properties." A quale is the brain's mode of representing a particular physical property to itself.

CHAPTER 2.78.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:01AM

2.67. by Terrapin Station

I don't agree with that. Qualia are properties of mental brain states. They're not something different than mental brain states that the brain only produces.

With "mental brain states" you're confusing two vocabularies. There are no "mental brain states." There are brain states and mental states. Brain states (arguably) produce mental states, including qualia.

As if brains and consciousness are something different. They're not.

Yes, they are different. Consciousness is a product of brains, an ongoing activity of brains, just as a motion picture is an ongoing activity of a movie projector.

CHAPTER 2.79.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:09AM

2.78. by GE Morton

Yes, they are different. Consciousness is a product of brains, an ongoing activity of brains, just as a motion picture is an ongoing activity of a movie projector.

More specifically, like a movie projector running a reel of film. Consciousness is a product produced by brains processing internal and external signals.

CHAPTER 2.80.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 2:26AM

2.78. by GE Morton



2.67. by Terrapin Station

I don't agree with that. Qualia are properties of mental brain states. They're not something different than mental brain states that the brain only produces.

With "mental brain states" you're confusing two vocabularies. There are no "mental brain states." There are brain states and mental states. Brain states (arguably) produce mental states, including qualia.

Mental states are identical to a subset of brain states. They're not something different than brain states.

Yes, they are different. Consciousness is a product of brains, an ongoing activity of brains, just as a motion picture is an ongoing activity of a movie projector.

Wrong.

CHAPTER 2.81.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:28 AM

2.75. by Terrapin Station

2.73. by Atla

Again, I don't care about the new physics you keep inventing, where two different things are identical to a third single thing. Prove it.

Wait--you don't buy that chords consist of multiple pitches? hahahaha

Multiple pitches are multiple pitches, they are different and they are occurring at the same time, according to physics. Calling different things a harmony doesn't turn it into one thing. Did I really have to explain that?

CHAPTER 2.82.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:52 AM


2.76. by GE Morton

No. That is a magenta square. "Magenta" is the name for the wavelengths of light reflected or emitted by that square. The qualia is whatever distinctive experiential state is induced in your mind when your nervous system detects light of those wavelengths, that informs you that light of those wavelengths is now stimulating your nervous system.

Ah okay. So we have magenta wavelengths (red and blue wavelengths), and the magenta qualia of the square. People usually don't realize that these are two different things, and what's actually directly appearing, the qualia, can't be detected by science.

CHAPTER 2.83.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 5:01 AM

2.63. by Gertie

That would be misleading. Qualia are not properties of brain processes, but products of brain processes.

Could you clarify how the difference works here?

I'd think that difference was pretty obvious. The product of a process is not a property of the processor. E.g., "Guernica" is a product of Picasso, but not a property of him. Cotton (the fabric) is a product of a textile mill, but not a property of the mill. Honey is a product of bees, but not a property of them. Though, we could say the *ability to make* honey is a property of bees --- and the ability of some brains to produce consciousness is a property of those brains.

Just to agree some terms - would you go with qualia are akin to units of certain types phenomenal experience like sensory perceptions, emotions and sensations? Or all 'what it's like' experience?

Yes. Qualia are the brain's mode of representing all the various internal and external states it can detect to itself.

And what do you mean by 'consciousness' here, which the brain "presents phenomenal experience" to? Other types of experiential states, a self which is something different to experiential states, or something else?

That is a tough one, because the term "conscious" has two different senses in ordinary speech --- it is contrasted with "unconscious," e.g., asleep or in a coma, etc., and "non-conscious," assumed of plants, rocks, etc. So (living) humans are conscious in the second sense even when asleep. We can then define "consciousness" as the state of being conscious in the first sense. But that still doesn't tell us what consciousness is. My own (currently) preferred analysis, gaining favor among some neurophysiologists and AI researchers, is, *a system is conscious when it has the means to gather a wide variety of information about its own internal states and external environment, an ability to store information about past states of itself and the environment, can use that data to generate a dynamic, virtual model of itself and its surroundings, run "what-if" scenarios in the model, drawing upon memories of past actions and the results thereof, and direct its actions based on the output of that*

processing. I think we'd be willing to call any system that could do those things "conscious." It would pass the Turing test. Our subjective "conscious experience" is the ongoing operation of that virtual model.

Again, what is the "us" or Me here doing the distinguishing?

The "me" is the system as a whole, as represented in the virtual model --- the virtual "me." The brain generates that model, not unlike the way a computer and its program generates virtual world for a video game, except that the raw data for the brain's model is drawn from environment in real time.

If I'm reading you correctly, you're saying Dennett believes it's arbitrary that sticking my hand in a fire feels bad, and eating when I'm low on calories feels good?

Oh, no. Dennett wouldn't say anything like that. The tags --- qualia --- applied to mark various distinguishable inputs are arbitrary, in the sense of being unpredictable, but the evaluation of some of the the information they convey is surely pre-programmed (via evolution, as you say).

Umm OK. I'd thought Dennett disputed their ineffability.

He doesn't dispute it; he dismisses it, as an unnecessary feature of an unnecessary concept (qualia).


They are also intrinsically subjective --- there is no way for me to know whether the sensation you experience when seeing red is the same as mine --- that question doesn't even make sense.

Right it is unknowable, but the claim the question doesn't make sense implies a whole lot more.

It makes no sense in the same way that "The universe and everything in it is doubling in size every minute" makes no sense. It is a question impossible in principle to answer, as the latter is a proposition impossible in principle to verify. It is an idle question.

CHAPTER 2.84.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 9:32 AM



2.49. by Sculptor1

Maybe you can answer this.

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SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

Dennett simply means that there's no literal instantiation of blue in your brain, and no literal door. In other words, the color blue won't literally be found in your brain and neither will a door. You rather have a "representation" of blue and the door in your brain. It's kind of like how the color blue isn't literally in the word "blue," but the word (at least with semantic aspects "attached") is a representation of the color.


But surely isn't a "phenomenal quality" the same as a representation?

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

CHAPTER 2.85.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 9:35 AM



2.74. by Gertie

2.49. by Sculptor1

Maybe you can answer this.

I'm watching this Dennett video. At 12:40 minutes they get on to "qualia".
To versions of colour perception are set on for blue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSaEjLZIDqc>

1 Having a phenomenal quality of blue instantiated in my brain.
and

2 The quality of blue is represented by my brain.

Dennett claims that 1 is wrong and that 2 is correct.

For my money the idea of a qualia seems right. Others on this Forum page have claimed that Dennett has ejected the notion as crap.

SO I have two problems. What is the actual difference between 1 and 2, and does Dennett's acceptance of 2 invalidate the idea of qualia. If so why?

When Dennett says blue is represented by my brain, all I think he's saying is that the the neural interactions resulting from patterns of photons (which we call blue) are the "representation" of blue.

So blue is represented by different neurons firing to those that fire for red, or an itchy toe, etc.

I think he's just saying the physical processes are what's doing the "representaion" function.

He's not talking about the experience of seeing blue, only to say he doesn't label the experiencing part the representational part (as some do). He labels the physical processes the functional representation process.

It's not saying much imo. And the interviewer didn't help clarify that. But I could have misunderstood.

Thank you - that is pretty much what TerSta said too.

So I shall also present you with the same follow up.

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

CHAPTER 2.86.

~

2.84. by Sculptor1



2.65. by Terrapin Station

Dennett simply means that there's no literal instantiation of blue in your brain, and no literal door. In other words, the color blue won't literally be found in your brain and neither will a door. You rather have a "representation" of blue and the door in your brain. It's kind of like how the color blue isn't literally in the word "blue," but the word (at least with semantic aspects "attached") is a representation of the color.

But surely isn't a "phenomenal quality" the same as a representation?

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

If you haven't already, or if it's been awhile, you really should (re)read Dennett's "Quining Qualia." It's available online here: <http://cogprints.org/254/1/quinqual.htm>

Dennett isn't a fan of "phenomenal" talk, either, as he explains in "Quining Qualia."

I don't agree with Dennett's view on this overall, but he's primarily (a) criticizing many common things said about qualia that he thinks don't hold water or don't make much sense, and (b) suggesting that qualia talk is so burdened with things that don't hold water or make sense, and is otherwise so ambiguous, that it's best to just drop qualia talk altogether. The analogy he makes here is to "élan vital." As he notes, one might have some passably mundane and clear thing one has in mind by élan vital, such as DNA, but it's probably best not to call it élan vital.

CHAPTER 2.87.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 10:53 AM



2.81. by Atla

2.75. by Terrapin Station

*Wait--you don't buy that chords consist of multiple pitches? hahahaha
Multiple pitches are multiple pitches, they are different and they are occurring at the same time, according to physics. Calling different things a harmony doesn't turn it into one thing. Did I really have to explain that?*

How is a pitch "one thing" on your view? Sound waves obtain via vibrations in some medium, but the medium is many different things. For example, if the medium is atmosphere, we're talking

about atoms of nitrogen and so on. And for that matter, how is an atom of nitrogen "one thing" on your view? It has seven protons, seven neutrons and seven electrons. For that matter, how is a single proton "one thing" on your view? Protons are composed of three valence quarks. Etc.

You need to explain your criteria for "one thing" and why it matters whether any x is "one thing" or not.

CHAPTER 2.88.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:03 AM



2.82. by Atla

2.76. by GE Morton

No. That is a magenta square. "Magenta" is the name for the wavelengths of light reflected or emitted by that square. The qualia is whatever distinctive experiential state is induced in your mind when your nervous system detects light of those wavelengths, that informs you that light of those wavelengths is now stimulating your nervous system.

Ah okay. So we have magenta wavelengths (red and blue wavelengths), and the magenta qualia of the square. People usually don't realize that these are two different things, and what's actually directly appearing, the qualia, can't be detected by science.

Qualia are just the properties of mental (conscious) brain states, from the perspective of those brain states. That's different than properties of things that aren't brain states, obviously, but that doesn't imply that objective properties don't exist just as well. And science can't tell us the properties of anything from the perspective of being that thing. That's not limited to brain states. Science can only tell us properties from observational perspectives. Properties from observational perspectives are different than properties from the perspective of being whatever "item" in question.

"Perspective" above, by the way, doesn't imply consciousness, it rather amounts to a spatiotemporal frame or point of reference.

CHAPTER 2.89.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:22 AM

2.87. by Terrapin Station

2.81. by Atla

Multiple pitches are multiple pitches, they are different and they are occurring at the same time, according to physics. Calling different things a harmony doesn't turn it into one thing. Did I really have to explain that?

How is a pitch "one thing" on your view? Sound waves obtain via vibrations in some medium, but the medium is many different things. For example, if the medium is atmosphere, we're talking about atoms of nitrogen and so on. And for that matter, how is an atom of nitrogen "one thing" on your view? It has seven protons, seven neutrons and seven electrons. For that matter, how is a single proton "one thing" on your view? Protons are composed of three valence quarks. Etc.

You need to explain your criteria for "one thing" and why it matters whether any x is "one thing" or not.

What does this have to do with my views ffs?

In physics, it just doesn't work like: 'Well here is thing A and here is thing B, and together they are identical to thing C. Even though all three things are different as far as we can tell. Oh, and according to our theories and measurements, C doesn't exist at all by the way.'

Maybe you think that if 'zoom out' from red and blue qualia, then we get magenta qualia, and vice versa? If so then as I said, this is new physics, prove it.

CHAPTER 2.90.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:28 AM

2.88. by Terrapin Station

2.82. by Atla

Ah okay. So we have magenta wavelengths (red and blue wavelengths), and the magenta qualia of the square. People usually don't realize that these are two different things, and what's actually directly appearing, the qualia, can't be detected by science.


Qualia are just the properties of mental (conscious) brain states, from the perspective of those brain states. That's different than properties of things that aren't brain states, obviously, but that doesn't imply that objective properties don't exist just as well. And science can't tell us the properties of anything from the perspective of being that thing. That's not limited to brain states. Science can only tell us properties from observational perspectives. Properties from observational perspectives are different than properties from the perspective of being whatever "item" in question.

"Perspective" above, by the way, doesn't imply consciousness, it rather amounts to a spatiotemporal frame or point of reference.

Utter nonsense. The laws of physics are universal or quasi-universal, so the spatiotemporal reference isn't supposed to make such a difference.

CHAPTER 2.91.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:30 AM



2.86. by Terrapin Station

2.84. by Sculptor1

But surely isn't a "phenomenal quality" the same as a representation?

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

If you haven't already, or if it's been awhile, you really should (re)read Dennett's "Quining Qualia." It's available online here: <http://cogprints.org/254/1/quinqual.htm>

Dennett isn't a fan of "phenomenal" talk, either, as he explains in "Quining Qualia."

I don't agree with Dennett's view on this overall, but he's primarily (a) criticizing many common things said about qualia that he thinks don't hold water or don't make much sense, and (b) suggesting that qualia talk is so burdened with things that don't hold water or make sense, and is otherwise so ambiguous, that it's best to just drop qualia talk altogether. The analogy he makes here is to "élan vital." As he notes, one might have some passably mundane and clear thing one has in mind by élan vital, such as DNA, but it's probably best not to call it élan vital.

It looks like Dennett is just deciding to jettison a good idea, because of the accretion the idea has attracted, and that the idea seems not to add anything to describe consciousness. I'll have to read it through though.

I'll get back to this one.

CHAPTER 2.92.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:35 AM



2.90. by Atla

2.88. by Terrapin Station

Qualia are just the properties of mental (conscious) brain states, from the perspective of those brain states. That's different than properties of things that aren't brain states, obviously, but that doesn't imply that objective properties don't exist just as well. And science can't tell us the properties of anything from the perspective of being that thing. That's not limited to brain states. Science can only tell us properties from observational perspectives. Properties from observational perspectives are different than properties from the perspective of being whatever "item" in question.

"Perspective" above, by the way, doesn't imply consciousness, it rather amounts to a spatiotemporal frame or point of reference.

Utter nonsense. The laws of physics are universal or quasi-universal, so the spatiotemporal reference isn't supposed to make such a difference.

Of course it makes a difference, regardless of the universality of physical law. In fact the universality of physical law demands that a point of view gets different results.

You are just confused. Looking at a thing is not the same as a thing.

No one but me can say how much my headache hurts me. You will never know how much I mentally head-slap every time I read your posts. My internal dialogue and experience cannot be known by another. Being universal that means that nothing science can look at can be the same as the thing in itself.

CHAPTER 2.93.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:38 AM



2.89. by Atla

What does this have to do with my views ffs?

You keep bringing up whether an x is "one thing," as if that's well-defined, factual (aside from facts re how an individual thinks about it), and important for anything.

In physics, it just doesn't work like: 'Well here is thing A and here is thing B, and together they are identical to thing C.

Aside from why we'd be talking about what the conventions of physics are, are you saying that physics doesn't work like the above, or were the sentences after this necessary for how physics doesn't work according to you?

Do you mean to claim that physics doesn't say that a nitrogen atom is identical to seven protons, neutrons and electrons in particular dynamic relations?

Even though all three things are different as far as we can tell.

Every numerically distinct thing is different. But aside from that, even for a type realist, protons, neutrons and electrons are different.

Oh, and according to our theories and measurements, C doesn't exist at all by the way.'

We at least agree that physics doesn't work by saying that compound entities don't exist, but who suggested anything like this?

Maybe you think that if 'zoom out' from red and blue qualia, then we get magenta qualia, and vice versa? If so then as I said, this is new physics, prove it.

Did you really mean to type "qualia" there? The discussion was about objective magenta. That's not going to have anything to do with qualia. "Qualia" is a term reserved for subjective properties.

CHAPTER 2.94.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:39 AM

2.92. by Sculptor1

2.90. by Atla

Utter nonsense. The laws of physics are universal or quasi-universal, so the spatiotemporal reference isn't supposed to make such a difference.

Of course it makes a difference, regardless of the universality of physical law. In fact the universality of physical law demands that a point of view gets different results.

You are just confused. Looking at a thing is not the same as a thing.

No one but me can say how much my headache hurts me. You will never know how much I mentally head-slap every time I read your posts. My internal dialogue and experience cannot be known by another. Being universal that means that nothing science can look at can be the same as the thing in itself.

Ffs, quote the part of the Standard Model then which explains the difference between physical properties and qualia properties.

CHAPTER 2.95.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:44 AM



2.90. by Atla

2.88. by Terrapin Station

Qualia are just the properties of mental (conscious) brain states, from the perspective of those brain states. That's different than properties of things that aren't brain states, obviously, but that doesn't imply that objective properties don't exist just as well. And science can't tell us the properties of anything from the perspective of being that thing. That's not limited to brain states. Science can only tell us properties from observational perspectives. Properties from observational perspectives are different than properties from the perspective of being whatever "item" in question.

"Perspective" above, by the way, doesn't imply consciousness, it rather amounts to a spatiotemporal frame or point of reference.

Utter nonsense. The laws of physics are universal or quasi-universal, so the spatiotemporal reference isn't supposed to make such a difference.

Realism on physical laws, and where for some odd reason we're pretending that special and general relativity didn't happen, wouldn't in any way suggest that the properties of any x aren't different from different spatiotemporal points or frames. That would only be the case of there were a physical law that said that properties are necessarily spatiotemporal-invariant. Of course, there would be no way to know this, so it's a good thing that there's no such law.

Of course, I'm not a realist on physical laws, but that makes no difference to the above.

CHAPTER 2.96.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:46 AM

2.93. by Terrapin Station

2.89. by Atla

What does this have to do with my views ffs?

You keep bringing up whether an x is "one thing," as if that's well-defined, factual (aside from facts re how an individual thinks about it), and important for anything.

In physics, it just doesn't work like: 'Well here is thing A and here is thing B, and together they are identical to thing C.

Aside from why we'd be talking about what the conventions of physics are, are you saying that physics doesn't work like the above, or were the sentences after this necessary for how physics doesn't work according to you?

Do you mean to claim that physics doesn't say that a nitrogen atom is identical to seven protons, neutrons and electrons in particular dynamic relations?

Even though all three things are different as far as we can tell. Every numerically distinct thing is different. But aside from that, even for a type realist, protons, neutrons and electrons are different.

If we are talking about protons, neutrons etc. then 'nitrogen' is just how we call them together. But they are still a group different things.

If you think that magenta qualia is also made of two different things then

PROVE IT

CHAPTER 2.97.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:49 AM



2.96. by Atla

2.93. by Terrapin Station

You keep bringing up whether an x is "one thing," as if that's well-defined, factual (aside from facts re how an individual thinks about it), and important for anything.

Aside from why we'd be talking about what the conventions of physics are, are you saying that physics doesn't work like the above, or were the sentences after this necessary for how physics doesn't work according to you?

Do you mean to claim that physics doesn't say that a nitrogen atom is identical to seven protons, neutrons and electrons in particular dynamic relations?

Every numerically distinct thing is different. But aside from that, even for a type realist, protons, neutrons and electrons are different.

If we are talking about protons, neutrons etc. then 'nitrogen' is just how we call them together. But they are still a group different things.

If you think that magenta qualia is also made of two different things then

PROVE IT

What magenta is is no mystery, lol. Why not simply read the Wikipedia page? It explains that magenta is a combo of red and blue/violet light. Seriously, how did you get it into your mind that there's something mysterious about magenta? What was the source of this for you? Maybe I can make some sense of your source.

CHAPTER 2.98.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:50 AM

2.95. by Terrapin Station

2.90. by Atla

Utter nonsense. The laws of physics are universal or quasi-universal, so the spatiotemporal reference isn't supposed to make such a difference.

Realism on physical laws, and where for some odd reason we're pretending that special and general relativity didn't happen, wouldn't in any way suggest that the properties of any x aren't different from different spatiotemporal points or frames. That would only be the case of there were a physical law that said that properties are necessarily spatiotemporal-invariant. Of course, there would be no way to know this, so it's a good thing that there's no such law.

Of course, I'm not a realist on physical laws, but that makes no difference to the above.

Okay quote the part of the Standard Model then which explains the difference between physical properties and qualia properties, and how and why we have to switch between them depending on spatiotemporal reference.

CHAPTER 2.99.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:52 AM



2.98. by Atla

2.95. by Terrapin Station

Realism on physical laws, and where for some odd reason we're pretending that special and general relativity didn't happen, wouldn't in any way suggest that the properties of any x aren't different from different spatiotemporal points or frames. That would only be the case of there were a physical law that said that properties are necessarily spatiotemporal-invariant. Of course, there would be no way to know this, so it's a good thing that there's no such law.

Of course, I'm not a realist on physical laws, but that makes no difference to the above.

Okay quote the part of the Standard Model then which explains the difference between physical properties and qualia properties, and how and why we have to switch between them depending on spatiotemporal reference.

The relevance of the standard model here would be?

CHAPTER 2.100.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:55 AM

2.97. by Terrapin Station

What magenta is is no mystery, lol. Why not simply read the Wikipedia page? It explains that magenta is a combo of red and blue/violet light. Seriously, how did you get it into your mind that there's something mysterious about magenta? What was the source of this for you? Maybe I can make some sense of your source.

If you can't read a Wikipedia page, I'll help: it doesn't say that magenta is a combo of red and blue/violet light.

And it's not mysterious to me, I use this example to try to get people who don't understand the physics/qualia problem, to think. However even grasping the problem is beyond your abilities, let alone trying to solve it.

CHAPTER 2.101.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:57 AM



Atla, I picture you frequently acting like this when you post here:



CHAPTER 2.102.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:57 AM

2.99. by Terrapin Station

2.98. by Atla

Okay quote the part of the Standard Model then which explains the difference between physical properties and qualia properties, and how and why we have to switch between them depending on spatiotemporal reference.

The relevance of the standard model here would be?

You're the one who claims to be a physicalist, and that everything nonphysical is incoherent.

If you subscribe to physicalism as a philosophy, maybe you should have some vague idea about what it actually is.

CHAPTER 2.103.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:00 PM



2.100. by Atla

If you can't read a Wikipedia page, I'll help: it doesn't say that magenta is a combo of red and blue/violet light.

Good example: "Magenta is associated with perception of spectral power distributions concentrated mostly in longer wavelength reddish components and shorter wavelength blueish components."

And it's not mysterious to me, I use this example to try to get people who don't understand the physics/qualia problem, to think. However even grasping the problem is beyond your abilities, let alone trying to solve it.

There's no problem to be had.

CHAPTER 2.104.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:01 PM



Oops I tried to type "For example" but my kindle changed it.

CHAPTER 2.105.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:02 PM

2.103. by Terrapin Station

2.100. by Atla

If you can't read a Wikipedia page, I'll help: it doesn't say that magenta is a combo of red and blue/violet light.

Good example: "Magenta is associated with perception of spectral power distributions concentrated mostly in longer wavelength reddish components and shorter wavelength blueish components."

And it's not mysterious to me, I use this example to try to get people who don't understand the physics/qualia problem, to think. However even grasping the problem is beyond your abilities, let alone trying to solve it.

There's no problem to be had.

Indeed a good example. People who CAN read and think, understand the difference between 'is' and 'associated with'.

CHAPTER 2.106.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:03 PM



2.102. by Atla

2.99. by Terrapin Station

The relevance of the standard model here would be?

You're the one who claims to be a physicalist, and that everything nonphysical is incoherent.

If you subscribe to physicalism as a philosophy, maybe you should have some vague idea about what it actually is.

What if definitely is NOT is being a cheerleader for (the conventional wisdom of) physics.

So the relevance is your ridiculous misunderstanding of what physicalism is.

CHAPTER 2.107.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:06 PM



2.105. by Atla

2.103. by Terrapin Station

Good example: "Magenta is associated with perception of spectral power distributions concentrated mostly in longer wavelength reddish components and shorter wavelength blueish components."

There's no problem to be had.

Indeed a good example. People who CAN read and think, understand the difference between 'is' and 'associated with'.

Associated with rather than is because you could be colorblind, for example.

We're not going to say that something is the perception of x regardless of what you perceive, because various things can affect or go wrong with perception.

CHAPTER 2.108.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:06 PM

I just want to know the fat man's back-story, leading to that point, now. Tiny insights into people's lives can be very frustrating.

CHAPTER 2.109.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:08 PM

2.101. by Terrapin Station

Atla, I picture you frequently acting like this when you post here:



Hehe well I'm just here for fun, I'm not taking it seriously, as you imagine. But it's true that the depth of stupidity I encounter sometimes surprises me.

CHAPTER 2.110.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:10 PM

2.106. by Terrapin Station

2.102. by Atla

You're the one who claims to be a physicalist, and that everything nonphysical is incoherent.

If you subscribe to physicalism as a philosophy, maybe you should have some vague idea about what it actually is.

What if definitely is NOT is being a cheerleader for (the conventional wisdom of) physics.

So the relevance is your ridiculous misunderstanding of what physicalism is.

So you're a physicalist, just minus the physics part. Got it.

CHAPTER 2.111.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:16 PM

2.107. by Terrapin Station

2.105. by Atla

Indeed a good example. People who CAN read and think, understand the difference between 'is' and 'associated with'.

Associated with rather than is because you could be colorblind, for example.

We're not going to say that something is the perception of x regardless of what you perceive, because various things can affect or go wrong with perception.

See, now you are again making up a random story, after being called out on your latest lie.

Well this one's got nothing to do with 'special cases' like color blindness, and if you had read Wikipedia pages before, you would know that.

CHAPTER 2.112.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:22 PM



2.110. by Atla

2.106. by Terrapin Station

What if definitely is NOT is being a cheerleader for (the conventional wisdom of) physics.

*So the relevance is your ridiculous misunderstanding of what physicalism is.
So you're a physicalist, just minus the physics part. Got it.*

It has nothing to do with being devoted to, subservient to, etc. physics. Thinking that is as ridiculous as thinking that a musician is going to believe in muses, or thinking that a concierge is probably a prison warden.

CHAPTER 2.113.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:27 PM

2.112. by Terrapin Station

2.110. by Atla

*So you're a physicalist, just minus the physics part. Got it.
It has nothing to do with being devoted to, subservient to, etc. physics. Thinking that is as ridiculous as thinking that a musician is going to believe in muses, or thinking that a concierge is probably a prison warden.*

Subservience lol okay whatever you say. I'll leave you to it.

CHAPTER 2.114.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:27 PM



2.111. by Atla

2.107. by Terrapin Station

Associated with rather than is because you could be colorblind, for example.

We're not going to say that something is the perception of x regardless of what you perceive, because various things can affect or go wrong with perception.

See, now you are again making up a random story, after being called out on your latest lie.

Well this one's got nothing to do with 'special cases' like color blindness, and if you had read Wikipedia pages before, you would know that.

Here he goes knocking the table over again . . .

You're thinking that "associated with" rather than "is" is an allusion to qualia where qualia are supposedly something different than a property of (perceptual) brain states?

If so, what are you using as textual support of that conclusion?

CHAPTER 2.115.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:29 PM

Here's another simple explanation of how to get magenta light:

[https://maggiesscienceconnection.weebly ... color.html](https://maggiesscienceconnection.weebly...color.html)



CHAPTER 2.116.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:58 PM



2.94. by Atla

2.92. by Sculptor1

Of course it makes a difference, regardless of the universality of physical law. In fact the universality of physical law demands that a point of view gets different results.

You are just confused. Looking at a thing is not the same as a thing.

No one but me can say how much my headache hurts me. You will never know how much I mentally head-slap every time I read your posts. My internal dialogue and experience cannot be known by another. Being universal that means that nothing science can look at can be the same as the thing in itself.

Ffs, quote the part of the Standard Model then which explains the difference between physical properties and qualia properties.

Why?

Don't you know?

CHAPTER 2.117.

~


Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:59 PM

Quote the part of the standard model which explains swimming pool maintenance.



CHAPTER 2.118.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:04 PM



2.115. by Terrapin Station

Here's another simple explanation of how to get magenta light:

[https://maggiesscienceconnection.weebly... color.html](https://maggiesscienceconnection.weebly...color.html)

Surprising, isn't it, that at times some of us feel it necessary to offer high school explanations to people who do not understand the basics.

The two elements of colour mixing were explained to me by the time I was 14. The subtractive by the art teacher, and the additive by the physics teacher, both knew the theory of the other. What they both understood is that colour only happens inside the brain; the physics teacher thought this was really interesting the art teacher not so much.

Why is this simple set of ideas so poorly understood?

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:37 PM

I bet these people don't even know that if we "average" the wavelengths of red and blue light, we get green wavelength light.

And that's just one of the two issues. No matter. You can't argue with stupid.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:52 PM

2.85. by Sculptor1

2.74. by Gertie

When Dennett says blue is represented by my brain, all I think he's saying is that the the neural interactions resulting from patterns of photons (which we call blue) are the "representation" of blue.

So blue is represented by different neurons firing to those that fire for red, or an itchy toe, etc.

I think he's just saying the physical processes are what's doing the "representaion" function.

He's not talking about the experience of seeing blue, only to say he doesn't label the experiencing part the representational part (as some do). He labels the physical processes the functional representation process.

It's not saying much imo. And the interviewer didn't help clarify that. But I could have misunderstood.

*Thank you - that is pretty much what TerSta said too.
So I shall also present you with the same follow up.*

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

I haven't gotten to the bottom of Dennett's view of qualia myself, it's confusing. But this specific point about the representational function occurring as a physical process rather than an experiential mental one doesn't specifically address the existence of the experience of seeing blue

(qualia) either way imo.

But the interviewer then asked what he called "the big question" - how do you get from the physical brain processes to the experience of seeing the blue door? (This is what Levine calls the Explanatory Gap, because there is no apparent physical explanation for how physical processes result in mental experience. Significantly not just how physics explains it, how it even could explain it https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Explanatory_gap).

Dennett doesn't directly answer. He said you have to address this functionally. He ended up saying science will one day be able to give a full third person (objective, observable) account of You, explain everything about you functionally in terms specific brain processes.

This account won't include first person mental experience (qualia), the 'what it's like' to see a blue door, , the 'what it's like' aspect of being You at all. Qualia don't need to exist in that functional account of your life - what you do, say and why can all be explained by physical processes. Mental sensory perceptions, their meaning to you, desires, reasoned decisions, etc, are irrelevant from that functional third person perspective. (Effectively dismissing free will).

Then he says - **And qualia don't exist in any other way either.** (around 17.30) Ie if the brain is doing all the third person person observable functional work, not only is free will an illusion, but **the existence** of phenomenal experience is an illusion.

That's my take.

But at other times he will say phenomenal mental experience **does exist**, and **the illusion is that it isn't what we think it is**. If we take into account what he says here, then the implication (well my guess) is it only exists as physical brain processes. What that would actually mean to him, I can't make out.

CHAPTER 2.121.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 2:54 PM

2.84. by Sculptor1

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.


It's important to keep in mind that a representation doesn't imply a resemblance. Anything can represent anything else. All that is needed is some understood or accepted correlation between them. E.g., the capital letter C can represent the speed of light, but it bears no resemblance to that

physical constant. A dot on map can represent a town, but it bears no resemblance to that town.

A quale represents, in the conscious mind, a brain state, but does not resemble it. That brain state, in turn, represents some (presumed) external state of affairs, but --- probably --- does not resemble it.

CHAPTER 2.122.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 3:01 PM



2.121. by GE Morton

2.84. by Sculptor1

That aside, how does this statement invalidate the idea of qualia as some on the thread claim is Dennett's belief?

I'd agree that our perceptions represent the outside world. No problem. But my experience of colour and pain are not simple representations of the world. They are only to be understood by the experiencing of them, and may be different for each of us.

It's important to keep in mind that a representation doesn't imply a resemblance. Anything can represent anything else. All that is needed is some understood or accepted correlation between them. E.g., the capital letter C can represent the speed of light, but it bears no resemblance to that physical constant. A dot on map can represent a town, but it bears no resemblance to that town.

A quale represents, in the conscious mind, a brain state, but does not resemble it. That brain state, in turn, represents some (presumed) external state of affairs, but --- probably --- does not resemble it.


That being the case. Nothing of our perception resembles what is in the objective world. Instead we live with a series of representations which approximate the world in ways effective enough to be physically logical.

Is this what you mean?

Or are you drawing too many distinctions. If you say that the quale is a state which in turn represents surely you are just adding another unnecessary layer here? Surely the quale is the experience of the sensory input.

CHAPTER 2.123.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 3:27 PM

2.80. by Terrapin Station

Mental states are identical to a subset of brain states. They're not something different than brain states.

Oh, my. Apparently you don't know the meanings of "mental state" or "brain state" or perhaps either. We determine the state of someone's brain by doing a EKG or CAT scan, perhaps a biopsy, and if we want all the gory details, by measuring nerve cell membrane permeability, ion exchange rates and electrical pulses between cells, noting cell pathologies, etc. On the other hand, we infer someone else's mental state from his observable behavior, and our own by introspection and reflection on our own behavior. Those two methodologies could hardly be more different. There is certainly a correlation between brain states and mental states, but they are hardly identical. Nor is one reducible to the other.

Yes, they are different. Consciousness is a product of brains, an ongoing activity of brains, just as a motion picture is an ongoing activity of a movie projector.

Wrong.

My, how illuminating. Such insight!

CHAPTER 2.124.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 3:35 PM



2.123. by GE Morton

Those two methodologies could hardly be more different.

Apparently you're unable to understand that this in no way implies that the two are not identical.

CHAPTER 2.125.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 3:55 PM



2.119. by Atla


I bet these people don't even know that if we "average" the wavelengths of red and blue light, we get green wavelength light.

And that's just one of the two issues. No matter. You can't argue with stupid.

Which would explain why you're incapable of effectively arguing with anyone.

Why are you averaging wavelengths, by the way? Is this like one of those "1 = 2" arguments?



Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:02 PM



2.123. by GE Morton

Oh, my. Apparently you don't know the meanings of "mental state" or "brain state" or perhaps either. We determine the state of someone's brain by doing a EKG or CAT scan, perhaps a biopsy, and if we want all the gory details, by measuring nerve cell membrane permeability, ion exchange rates and electrical pulses between cells, noting cell pathologies, etc.

This is a poor analogy.

A photo or video is not the same thing as the subject they depict, and a lump of brain tissue from a biopsy or a scan image is not the same as a brain state or mental state.

They are simple representations.

On the other hand, we infer someone else's mental state from his observable behavior, and our own by introspection and reflection on our own behavior. Those two methodologies could hardly be more different. There is certainly a correlation between brain states and mental states, but they are hardly identical. Nor is one reducible to the other.

It seems you want to mystify the facts, that there is ultimately some other state beyond the physical. Why?

Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. If you want to know what a mental state looks like then use a scanner. You are going to see a partial representation, but you have no warrant to suggest there is something mystical behind the curtain.



Atla on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:12 PM

2.125. by Terrapin Station

2.119. by Atla

I bet these people don't even know that if we "average" the wavelengths of red and blue light, we get green wavelength light.

And that's just one of the two issues. No matter. You can't argue with stupid.

Which would explain why you're incapable of effectively arguing with anyone.

Why are you averaging wavelengths, by the way? Is this like one of those "1 = 2" arguments?

And now you don't even understand why it was your last 'argument'.

It's crystal clear by now, your mental faculties don't reach that of the average teenager. That's why you can never understand anything, never argue anything.

CHAPTER 2.128.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:17 PM

2.124. by Terrapin Station

2.123. by GE Morton

Those two methodologies could hardly be more different.

Apparently you're unable to understand that this in no way implies that the two are not identical.

Er, yes, it does. Two things are identical IFF there are no discernible features, properties, by which they can be distinguished. Even then, since by hypothesis there are two things, they cannot be numerically identical.

CHAPTER 2.129.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:24 PM

GE

Thank you. I have issues! (I'm told this a lot).

Dennett sometimes says things which don't seem to tally with what I think you're saying. But maybe I'm not putting it together right. See what you think.

Could you clarify how the difference works here?

I'd think that difference was pretty obvious. The product of a process is not a property of the processor. E.g., "Guernica" is a product of Picasso, but not a property of him. Cotton (the fabric) is a product of a textile mill, but not a property of the mill. Honey is a product of bees, but not a property of them. Though, we could say the ability to make honey is a property of bees --- and the ability of some brains to produce consciousness is a property of those brains.

Just to agree some terms – would you go with qualia are akin to units of certain types phenomenal experience like sensory perceptions, emotions and sensations? Or all 'what it's like' experience?

Yes. Qualia are the brain's mode of representing all the various internal and external states it can detect to itself.

And what do you mean by 'consciousness' here, which the brain "presents phenomenal experience" to? Other types of experiential states, a self which is something different to experiential states, or something else?

That is a tough one, because the term "conscious" has two different senses in ordinary speech --- it is contrasted with "unconscious," e.g., asleep or in a coma, etc., and "non-conscious," assumed of plants, rocks, etc. So (living) humans are conscious in the second sense even when asleep. We can then define "consciousness" as the state of being conscious in the first sense. But that still doesn't tell us what consciousness is. My own (currently) preferred analysis, gaining favor among some neurophysiologists and AI researchers, is, a system is conscious when it has the means to gather a wide variety of information about its own internal states and external environment, an ability to store information about past states of itself and the environment, can use that data to generate a dynamic, virtual model of itself and its surroundings, run "what-if" scenarios in the model, drawing upon memories of past actions and the results thereof, and direct its actions based on the output of that processing. I think we'd be willing to call any system that could do those things "conscious." It would pass the Turing test. Our subjective "conscious experience" is the ongoing operation of that virtual model.

Again, what is the "us" or Me here doing the distinguishing?

The "me" is the system as a whole, as represented in the virtual model --- the virtual "me." The brain generates that model, not unlike the way a computer and its program generates virtual world for a video game, except that the raw data for the brain's model is drawn from environment in real time.

To briefly summarise how I'm interpreting you –

Brain processes create a product, in the way a steam train creates steam.

This product consists of experiential 'what it's like' states.

The content of these experiential states comprise a dynamic 'virtual model' of a material world and myself as an embodied agent within it.

The function of this experiential model of the world is to direct actions.

The brain then 'presents the experiential model to itself' – by which you mean presents the experiential model to the 'consciousness system/body as a whole'.

I can make sense of that up to the last sentence. And I don't think it's saying anything radical or

challenging about the notion of qualia up to that point. So I'm thinking I'm missing something? But I don't understand what the last sentence would actually mean - can you unpack that?

CHAPTER 2.130.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:43 PM

2.129. by Gertie

Dennett sometimes says

I believe, you might want to also consider that with Dennett, everything is a bit murky. He himself couldn't tell you for sure what his views are, and whether they are even internally consistent, and he may not have explored all of their implications either. Also, he may not fully believe everything he says, sometimes he just wants to shock people or gain a bit more attention.

CHAPTER 2.131.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:45 PM

2.126. by Sculptor1

2.123. by GE Morton

Oh, my. Apparently you don't know the meanings of "mental state" or "brain state" or perhaps either. We determine the state of someone's brain by doing a EKG or CAT scan, perhaps a biopsy, and if we want all the gory details, by measuring nerve cell membrane permeability, ion exchange rates and electrical pulses between cells, noting cell pathologies, etc.

This is a poor analogy.

A photo or video is not the same thing as the subject they depict, and a lump of brain tissue from a biopsy or a scan image is not the same as a brain state or mental state.

They are simple representations.

Well, you left out all those gory details. The point is that whatever we know or think we know, or can conceivably know, about brain states will be learned from physical examination of brains. But all of those investigations and measurements will tell us nothing about someone's mental state -- about how he feels about things, what things interest him, what things "look like" to him. But we can answer the latter questions by observing his behavior and talking to him.

It seems you want to mystify the facts, that there is ultimately some other state beyond the physical.

Oh, there are many states of many things beyond the physical, because there are entire realms of existents beyond the physical. We speak of such things as "the state of the art" in AI technology, or

the current state of the economy, or the state of the contemporary music scene, or the state of international trade, or the state of someone's marriage, or someone's state of mind, etc., etc. There is nothing mystical about any of those things.

Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. If you want to know what a mental state looks like then use a scanner.

No, Sculptor. The scanner will tell you something about the state of the patient's brain, but nothing about his mental state, e.g., what he is currently thinking about.

CHAPTER 2.132.

~

Gertie on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 4:49 PM

2.124. by Terrapin Station

2.123. by GE Morton

Those two methodologies could hardly be more different.

Apparently you're unable to understand that this in no way implies that the two are not identical.

Perhaps you can make an argument to explain how physical brains with a set of physical properties identified by a CAT scan for example, are identical to experiential mental states which don't possess those physical properties, but possess different experiential properties...?

CHAPTER 2.133.

~

Gertie on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 5:19 PM

2.130. by Atla

2.129. by Gertie

Dennett sometimes says

I believe, you might want to also consider that with Dennett, everything is a bit murky. He himself couldn't tell you for sure what his views are, and whether they are even internally consistent, and he may not have explored all of their implications either. Also, he may not fully believe everything he says, sometimes he just wants to shock people or gain a bit more attention.

Yeah that's pretty much my impression too. It's just not my cuppa.

And if that's right, he should be upfront rather than making these flashy claims and not backing them up.

I'm still open to being persuaded otherwise, but not optimistic.

CHAPTER 2.134.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 5:31 PM

2.133. by Gertie

Yeah that's pretty much my impression too. It's just not my cuppa.

And if that's right, he should be upfront rather than making these flashy claims and not backing them up.

I'm still open to being persuaded otherwise, but not optimistic.

I also remember someone claiming that he worked with Dennett, and in private he admitted that he says things like his denial of qualia, in order to gain publicity. He doesn't *really* believe it. Though I can't verify this story.

Seems to me that his current scheme is the reification of information (as distinct from matter/energy), another nasty trick that can cause some unnecessary confusion. Well he sure knows how to work the crowd I guess.

CHAPTER 2.135.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 6:02 PM



2.131. by GE Morton

Oh, there are many states of many things beyond the physical, because there are entire realms of existents beyond the physical. We speak of such things as "the state of the art" in AI technology, or the current state of the economy, or the state of the contemporary music scene, or the state of international trade, or the state of someone's marriage, or someone's state of mind, etc., etc. There is nothing mystical about any of those things.

No, these are all physical.

No, Sculptor. The scanner will tell you something about the state of the patient's brain, but nothing about his mental state, e.g., what he is currently thinking about.

There is no distinction. The state of the art is cashed out in physicality, exactly like mental states. These are not "realms", they are content. Like the content of computer code.

CHAPTER 2.136.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 9:00 PM

Atla wrote: Hehe well I'm just here for fun, I'm not taking it seriously,...

You've mentioned this more than once before. I guess you consider it important to remind people?

CHAPTER 2.137.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 10:18 PM

2.135. by Sculptor1

2.131. by GE Morton

Oh, there are many states of many things beyond the physical, because there are entire realms of existents beyond the physical. We speak of such things as "the state of the art" in AI technology, or the current state of the economy, or the state of the contemporary music scene, or the state of international trade, or the state of someone's marriage, or someone's state of mind, etc., etc. There is nothing mystical about any of those things.

No, these are all physical.

Really? The "state of the art" in AI technology refers to the extent of knowledge in that field. Knowledge is physical? And what do the laws of physics tell us about the contemporary music scene?

You're ignoring the obvious in order to defend a naive ontology.

No, Sculptor. The scanner will tell you something about the state of the patient's brain, but nothing about his mental state, e.g., what he is currently thinking about.

There is no distinction. The state of the art is cashed out in physicality, exactly like mental states.

Again . . . really? Please explain just how the mental state of, say, thinking about where to go for dinner "cashes out" physically --- what tests or examinations of brain tissue or activity will reveal that.

CHAPTER 2.138.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 10:51 PM



2.127. by Atla

And now you don't even understand why it was your last 'argument'.

You're not arguing that waves at different frequencies always amount to one wave that's an average, are you?

So, for example, if we play an an interval of F3 and C4, you'd argue that rather than two pitches, we get a single pitch, namely the average, a slightly flat A3?

CHAPTER 2.139.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 10:52 PM



2.128. by GE Morton

2.124. by Terrapin Station

Apparently you're unable to understand that this in no way implies that the two are not identical. Er, yes, it does. Two things are identical IFF there are no discernible features, properties, by which they can be distinguished. Even then, since by hypothesis there are two things, they cannot be numerically identical.

So the morning star and evening star aren't identical on your view, for example?

CHAPTER 2.140.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:02 PM



2.132. by Gertie

2.124. by Terrapin Station

Apparently you're unable to understand that this in no way implies that the two are not identical. Perhaps you can make an argument to explain how physical brains with a set of physical properties identified by a CAT scan for example, are identical to experiential mental states which don't possess those physical properties, but possess different experiential properties...?

Since the mental states are identical to the physical brain states, the mental states DO possess those physical properties, of course (and vice versa). The difference, rather, is one of spatiotemporal perspective. We're talking about a third-person observation versus a first-person observation. In other words, the difference of observing something "other" (and from a particular spatiotemporal location) versus being the thing in question.

It's a truism about ALL existents that properties are different from different spatiotemporal reference points or frames.

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:09 PM

2.129. by Gertie

To briefly summarise how I'm interpreting you -

Brain processes create a product, in the way a steam train creates steam.

This product consists of experiential "what it's like" states.

The content of these experiential states comprise a dynamic 'virtual model' of a material world and myself as an embodied agent within it.

An external world, but not necessarily a "material" one.

The function of this experiential model of the world is to direct actions.

To consider and weigh possible alternatives, and their possible outcomes, prior to taking some action. Yes.

The brain then 'presents the experiential model to itself' - by which you mean presents the experiential model to the "consciousness system/body as a whole".

Not quite. The brain creates the model, which is the "me" and the world we perceive. We, and the universe we see and conceive, ARE that model. The upshot here, important for AI, is that any system which can create a dynamic, virtual model of itself and its environment, constantly updated in real time, and choose its actions based on scenarios run in the model, will be "conscious."

A note on the "Explanatory Gap": There are two types of explanations, reductive ones and functional ones. The "gap" only acknowledges the former, and because mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, concludes that mental phenomena are inexplicable.

A reductive explanation proceeds by constructing a causal chain from one event or set of events to another. And of course, no such chain can be constructed between a physical event or process and a non-physical phenomenon.

But a functional explanation does not draw such a chain. Instead, it sets up a mechanism, a process, which is thought to be enabling or causative of a certain result, and seeing if the anticipated result follows. It disregards any intermediate steps which may or may not intervene between cause and effect. So if we can set up a system we believe will produce consciousness, and it indeed produces something we can't distinguish from conscious behavior, then we will have explained consciousness functionally.

BTW, Levine's seminal paper on the "Explanatory Gap" is here:

CHAPTER 2.142.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:21 PM

2.140. by Terrapin Station

It's a truism about ALL existents that properties are different from different spatiotemporal reference points or frames.

Well, you're disregarding another salient fact about perspective differences --- yes, while things will look different from different spatio-temporal vantage points, all vantage points are translatable into any other by well-defined and fairly simple algorithms. (A fairly simple computer program can display any 3-dimensional object from the viewpoint of any point in the frame space). But there is no algorithm for translating a physically determined brain state into a subjectively apprehended mental state, such as a quale. No analysis of Mary's brain will allow her, or us, to anticipate the sensation she will experience upon first seeing the red rose.

CHAPTER 2.143.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:22 PM

2.133. by Gertie



Also we should stress that mental properties ARE physical properties. It's just that that physical properties that we can third-person observe are different than the physical properties (known as "mental properties") that we first-person observe as the brain in question.

CHAPTER 2.144.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:28 PM

2.142. by GE Morton



But there is no algorithm for translating a physically determined brain state into a subjectively apprehended mental state, such as a quale.

Aside from whether the hypothesis is right (it's not on my view, but I want to avoid the tangent of that for the moment), it's not the case that we can't "translate" third-person states into first-

person states. We do this all the time with fMRI imaging for example. We can say "This third-person mapping is the person's first-person decision state" and so on.

CHAPTER 2.145.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:30 PM



2.142. by GE Morton

By the way, this question wasn't rhetorical--I'm expecting you to answer:

So the morning star and evening star aren't identical on your view, for example?

CHAPTER 2.146.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:43 PM

2.143. by Terrapin Station

Also we should stress that mental properties ARE physical properties. It's just that that physical properties that we can third-person observe are different than the physical properties (known as "mental properties") that we first-person observe as the brain in question.

That is blatantly contradictory. If a set of physical properties is "different" from "mental properties" then they are obviously NOT the same.

The physical properties you mention, BTW, are the same from everyone's perspective --- I can read and interpret the results of a physical examination of my brain as well as any third person. You, on the other hand, having no access to my mental states, are in no position to make any claim regarding their "sameness" to something else. That is nothing more than a spurious conjecture on your part.

The difference between brain states and mental states is NOT a perspective difference.

CHAPTER 2.147.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:48 PM

2.144. by Terrapin Station

... it's not the case that we can't "translate" third-person states into first-person states. We do this all the time with fMRI imaging for example. We can say "This third-person mapping is the person's first-person decision state" and so on.

The "mental state" in question is not the "decision state." It is the content of that state --- the issues and alternatives being weighed and considered. No MRI scan will reveal those.

CHAPTER 2.148.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 11:53 PM


2.145. by Terrapin Station

So the morning star and evening star aren't identical on your view, for example?

Yes, they are identical. Observations of the same thing at different times do not make the thing different. If we analyze the reflected spectra, calculate the diameter and mass of the body, and compute its orbital position at the two times and correct for the time difference, we will find no differences.

CHAPTER 2.149.

~

Terrapin Station on  Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:08 AM



2.146. by GE Morton

2.143. by Terrapin Station

Also we should stress that mental properties ARE physical properties. It's just that that physical properties that we can third-person observe are different than the physical properties (known as "mental properties") that we first-person observe as the brain in question.

That is blatantly contradictory. If a set of physical properties is "different" from "mental properties" then they are obviously NOT the same.

Properties are different from different spatiotemporal perspectives. That's not contradictory. For example, at time T1 the volcano is dormant. At time T2, the volcano is erupting.

Another example, at location x, F is circular. At location y, F is oblong.

Those would only be contradictory if we're saying that the properties are different from the same spatiotemporal location.

The physical properties you mention, BTW, are the same from everyone's perspective

No, they're not. Properties are different from different spatiotemporal perspectives.

"Perspective" here doesn't refer to something necessarily conscious, by the way. It refers to spatiotemporal reference points or reference frames.

CHAPTER 2.150.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:10 AM



2.147. by GE Morton

The "mental state" in question is not the "decision state." It is the content of that state --- the issues and alternatives being weighed and considered. No MRI scan will reveal those.

The MRI scan reveals it from a third-person perspective. It won't reveal it from a first-person perspective, because the fMRI is not the brain in question.

Likewise, an oscilloscope will show soundwaves from a perspective that is other than the soundwaves in question. It can't show the soundwaves from a perspective of being the soundwaves, because the oscilloscope isn't the soundwaves in question.

CHAPTER 2.151.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:12 AM



2.148. by GE Morton

Yes, they are identical. Observations of the same thing at different times do not make the thing different. If we analyze the reflected spectra, calculate the diameter and mass of the body, and compute its orbital position at the two times and correct for the time difference, we will find no differences.

There are properties by which the morning star and evening star can be distinguished.

CHAPTER 2.152.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:47 AM

2.149. by Terrapin Station

Properties are different from different spatiotemporal perspectives.

Er, no. The properties of a thing are the same, at a given time, from all perspectives. They only *look* different from different perspectives. The properties of an external thing are not dependent upon the observer. That is absurd.

For example, at time T_1 the volcano is dormant. At time T_2 , the volcano is erupting.

Yep. That is not a difference in spatio-temporal perspective; it is a difference at different times. Many things change over time. But at any given time they are the same for all observers (for external, "physical" things with spatio-temporal locations), regardless of the observer's viewpoint. Any viewpoint can be easily translated into any other via a simple algorithm.

Another example, at location x , F is circular. At location y , F is oblong.

Nope. F has some definite shape. If it is circular it may look oblong from some viewpoint, but it is still circular.

CHAPTER 2.153.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:50 AM

2.151. by Terrapin Station

2.148. by GE Morton

Yes, they are identical. Observations of the same thing at different times do not make the thing different. If we analyze the reflected spectra, calculate the diameter and mass of the body, and compute its orbital position at the two times and correct for the time difference, we will find no differences.

There are properties by which the morning star and evening star can be distinguished.

Oh? What are those --- other than the fact that one observation is made in the morning, the other in the evening? That is a change in the observational circumstances, not in the thing observed.

CHAPTER 2.154.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:55 AM



2.152. by GE Morton

Er, no. The properties of a thing are the same, at a given time, from all perspectives. They only look different from different perspectives. The properties of an external thing are not dependent upon the observer. That is absurd.

Er yes. For example, take again the simple example of something that is circular from one reference point and oblong from another reference point.

It's not some way *from no reference point*. There is no such thing.

The reference point from which it's circular is just one reference point of a potential infinity of reference points available. There is no objective preference of one reference point over another. One reference point isn't correct while the others are incorrect. It's simply a fact that the property is different from different reference points.

CHAPTER 2.155.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:58 AM



2.153. by GE Morton

2.151. by Terrapin Station

There are properties by which the morning star and evening star can be distinguished. Oh? What are those --- other than the fact that one observation is made in the morning, the other in the evening? That is a change in the observational circumstances, not in the thing observed.

There's no "non-observational circumstance" from which properties are some way or the other. Or again, there's no reference point free reference point for anything.

CHAPTER 2.156.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 12:59 AM

2.150. by Terrapin Station

2.147. by GE Morton

The "mental state" in question is not the "decision state." It is the content of that state --- the issues and alternatives being weighed and considered. No MRI scan will reveal those.

The MRI scan reveals it from a third-person perspective. It won't reveal it from a first-person perspective, because the fMRI is not the brain in question.

Reveals WHAT from a "third person perspective"? The issues and alternatives being considered? Obviously not. That information will not be available to anyone, from any perspective, other than the subject's. The "it" to which you refer there --- whatever you imagine that pronoun to denote -- is not that content.

Likewise, a oscilloscope will show soundwaves from a perspective that is other than the soundwaves in question. It can't show the soundwaves from a perspective of being the soundwaves, because the oscilloscope isn't the soundwaves in question.

Soundwaves, not being perceiving, sentient creatures, do not have perspectives. You say the silliest things.

CHAPTER 2.157.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 1:04 AM



2.156. by GE Morton

Soundwaves, not being perceiving, sentient creatures, do not have perspectives. You say the silliest things.

Before I answer the other part, didn't I just write, in a response addressed to you, a post that you already responded to prior to this: "'Perspective' here doesn't refer to something necessarily conscious, by the way. It refers to spatiotemporal reference points or reference frames."

It seems like you didn't read that. Or you didn't understand it, yet you didn't bother to ask for clarification of it.

How are we supposed to have a conversation about philosophy if you're not even going to read and think about what I write?

CHAPTER 2.158.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 1:20 AM

Just to reiterate, in case this wasn't clear, no one can access a reference point of being any object (or process etc.) aside from oneself, and specifically one's subset of brain states that are mental states.



So we can't know what any properties are from the reference point of any other object "itself." We can only know all other objects (processes, etc.) from reference points of "otherness" -- the equivalent of third-person reference points.

This is why our mental brain states seem radically different from the reference point of being those brain states as opposed to various reference points for other things. Our mental brain states are the only thing for which we can access a "being the thing in question" reference frame.

CHAPTER 2.159.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 2:46 AM

2.154. by Terrapin Station

Er yes. For example, take again the simple example of something that is circular from one reference point and oblong from another reference point.

There is no such thing. It is either circular or is not. How it looks from someone's viewpoint is irrelevant. As I said before, any reference point can be translated to any other. We don't assign shapes to things based on any particular perspective. Its shape is what is constant through all perspective translations. *The properties of things are not functions of the viewpoint of any particular observer.*

If a spiral galaxy appears as an oval in telescopes, the astronomer corrects the perspective until all points on the circumference are equidistant from the telescope. THEN he reports its shape.

You need to reflect on the absurd implications of your claim.

CHAPTER 2.160.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 2:52 AM

2.157. by Terrapin Station

2.156. by GE Morton

Soundwaves, not being perceiving, sentient creatures, do not have perspectives. You say the silliest things.

Before I answer the other part, didn't I just write, in a response addressed to you, a post that you already responded to prior to this: "'Perspective' here doesn't refer to something necessarily conscious, by the way. It refers to spatiotemporal reference points or reference frames."

Sorry, doesn't fly. A perspective is how something looks to some observer. Reference points are not perspectives, unless some observer is situated at that reference point.

C H A P T E R 2 . 1 6 1 .

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 3:18 AM

2.158. by Terrapin Station

Just to reiterate, in case this wasn't clear, no one can access a reference point of being any object (or process etc.) aside from oneself, and specifically one's subset of brain states that are mental states.

That is false. I can translate from any reference point to any other --- often by merely walking across the room, and thereby see what you are seeing. I can't see what is going on in your mind, however, no matter what reference point I occupy. I can, on the other hand, see what is going on in your brain (in principle).

You're evading the questions asked earlier: Can a MRI or CAT scan, or any other method of detecting/measuring brain activity, tell us what the patient is thinking about? Or the "properties" of whatever quale denotes the color red, for him?

Please don't attempt to dismiss that impossibility as resulting from a difference in perspectives. Spatio-temporal loci have nothing to do with it. Mental phenomena is not identical to, reducible to, or predictable from any observable neural behavior --- because the two phenomena are qualitatively different. Claiming they are identical ignores the obvious.

This is why our mental brain states seem radically different from the reference point of being those brain states as opposed to various reference points for other things.

"Mental brain states" is a contradiction in terms.

C H A P T E R 2 . 1 6 2 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:26 AM

2.136. by Steve3007

*Atla wrote: Hehe well I'm just here for fun, I'm not taking it seriously, ...
You've mentioned this more than once before. I guess you consider it important to remind people?*

Sometimes, people who I could debate a little bit seriously, do come along. But since idiots like TS, Sculptor and Age make most discussion impossible on such forums by ruining most threads (and they can be at this all day like their lives depended on it), and then they call me the idiot, well maybe I don't want to people think that I'm actually taking them seriously, because I don't. Now why don't you stop enabling their behaviour.

CHAPTER 2.163.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:05 AM



2.137. by GE Morton

2.135. by Sculptor1

*No, these are all physical.
Really? The "state of the art" in AI technology refers to the extent of knowledge in that field.
Knowledge is physical? And what do the laws of physics tell us about the contemporary music scene?*

Of course. Do you think there would be any knowledge without brains, books, and other media?

You're ignoring the obvious in order to defend a naive ontology.

*There is no distinction. The state of the art is cashed out in physicality, exactly like mental states.
Again . . . really? Please explain just how the mental state of, say, thinking about where to go for dinner
"cashes out" physically --- what tests or examinations of brain tissue or activity will reveal that.*

Well try to decide where to go without your brain. And you will have your question answered.

CHAPTER 2.164.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:31 AM




2.159. by GE Morton

There is no such thing. It is either circular or is not. How it looks from someone's viewpoint is irrelevant. As I said before, any reference point can be translated to any other. We don't assign shapes to things based on any particular perspective.

There isn't a shape "from no reference point." I wrote this already. If you're going to disagree with it, you need to explain how there's a shape from no reference point.

CHAPTER 2.165.

~

Terrapin Station on  Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:36 AM



2.160. by GE Morton

[quote="Terrapin Station" post_id=366590 time=1599699868 user_id=46607

Before I answer the other part, didn't I just write, in a response addressed to you, a post that you already responded to prior to this: "'Perspective' here doesn't refer to something necessarily conscious, by the way. It refers to spatiotemporal reference points or reference frames."


Sorry, doesn't fly. A perspective is how something looks to some observer. Reference points are not perspectives, unless some observer is situated at that reference point.

[/quote]

In other words, even though someone is explicitly telling you how they're using a term, you'll just ignore it in some cases. Nice.

CHAPTER 2.166.

~

Terrapin Station on  Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:37 AM



2.161. by GE Morton

2.158. by Terrapin Station

Just to reiterate, in case this wasn't clear, no one can access a reference point of being any object (or process etc.) aside from oneself, and specifically one's subset of brain states that are mental states.

That is false.

You can be an object other than yourself? I suppose you can outrun your shadow, too.

CHAPTER 2.167.

~

Gertie on  Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 1:47 PM

GE

Gertie wrote: ↑
Today, 12:24 pm

To briefly summarise how I'm interpreting you -

Brain processes create a product, in the way a steam train creates steam.

This product consists of experiential "what it's like" states.

The content of these experiential states comprise a dynamic 'virtual model' of a material world and myself as an embodied agent within it.

An external world, but not necessarily a "material" one.

The function of this experiential model of the world is to direct actions.

To consider and weigh possible alternatives, and their possible outcomes, prior to taking some action.
Yes.

Understood.

The brain then 'presents the experiential model to itself' - by which you mean presents the experiential model to the "consciousness system/body as a whole".

Not quite. The brain creates the model, which is the "me" and the world we perceive. We, and the universe we see and conceive, ARE that model.

OK. So what does it mean to say neurons, chemicals, etc *present that model* they've produced to themselves?

The upshot here, important for AI, is that any system which can create a dynamic, virtual model of itself and its environment, constantly updated in real time, and choose its actions based on scenarios run in the model, will be "conscious."

Well that would depend on whether that recreates the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiential states to manifest, and while we know brains have them, we don't know what those conditions are. They might be substrate dependent (see for example [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra ... %20neurons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra...%20neurons)).

A note on the "Explanatory Gap": There are two types of explanations, reductive ones and functional ones. The "gap" only acknowledges the former, and because mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, concludes that mental phenomena are inexplicable.

A reductive explanation proceeds by constructing a causal chain from one event or set of events to another. And of course, no such chain can be constructed between a physical event or process and a non-physical phenomenon.

Right. And when Dennett says we have to talk about consciousness in functional terms, he's saying he can't explain it any other way. And I think that's because of what Chalmers calls The Hard Problem, which Dennett denies exists. Or "dissolves" - which I suppose it does if you ignore it. How can you be a materialist which is an ontological account rooted in matter and the smaller bits of matter it's reducible to, and just ignore the biggest problem this raises re experience...

But a functional explanation does not draw such a chain. Instead, it sets up a mechanism, a process, which is thought to be enabling or causative of a certain result, and seeing if the anticipated result follows. It disregards any intermediate steps which may or may not intervene between cause and effect. So if we can set up a system we believe will produce consciousness, and it indeed produces something we can't distinguish from conscious behavior, then we will have explained consciousness functionally.

I don't find the functional approach to phenomenal consciousness satisfactory. It might or might not work to produce an experiencing machine, but it'll be by imitating certain functional features of a known experiencing system (brains), not by explaining it in the way reductionism might. Hence the problem of how to test AI for phenomenal experience - we won't know if reproducing that model making function has captured the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiencing. We might only have created a machine which is very good at mimicking experiential states, and is incapable of understanding and correctly answering questions about feelings, thinking, seeing, etc. We should still def be trying it to see what happens of course, it's a possible practical way forward.

BTW, Levine's seminal paper on the "Explanatory Gap" is here:

<https://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/maydede/min...oryGap.pdf>

Thanks. Looks like it might need a lot of background reading to really understand, but I'll give it a go.

C H A P T E R 2 . 1 6 8 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 1:52 PM

TS

Perhaps you can make an argument to explain how physical brains with a set of physical properties identified by a CAT scan for example, are identical to experiential mental states which don't possess those physical properties, but possess different experiential properties...?

Since the mental states are identical to the physical brain states, the mental states DO possess those physical properties, of course (and vice versa). The difference, rather, is one of spatiotemporal perspective. We're talking about a third-person observation versus a first-person observation. In other words, the difference of observing something "other" (and from a particular spatiotemporal location) versus being the thing in question.

You are talking about a way of describing the distinction. What is the explanation?

C H A P T E R 2 . 1 6 9 .

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 3:28 PM



2.167. by Gertie

but it'll be by immitating certain functional features of a known experiencing system (brains),

How are brains a "known experiencing system" on your view if mentality (at least a la experience, then) isn't physical/isn't identical to brain states?

CHAPTER 2.170.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 3:31 PM



2.168. by Gertie

TS

Since the mental states are identical to the physical brain states, the mental states DO possess those physical properties, of course (and vice versa). The difference, rather, is one of spatiotemporal perspective. We're talking about a third-person observation versus a first-person observation. In other words, the difference of observing something "other" (and from a particular spatiotemporal location) versus being the thing in question.

You are talking about a way of describing the distinction. What is the explanation?

The explanation was given above (and I've given it countless times here): properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points. There's a difference (in properties) from the spatiotemporal reference point of being a brain (or being a set of mental brain states more specifically) versus observing a brain from another spatiotemporal reference point that isn't identical to the brain in question.

CHAPTER 2.171.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:16 PM

2.169. by Terrapin Station

2.167. by Gertie

*but it'll be by immitating certain functional features of a known experiencing system (brains),
How are brains a "known experiencing system" on your view if mentality (at least a la experience, then) isn't physical/isn't identical to brain states?*

I don't know how brains experience, just like you don't.

CHAPTER 2.172.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:40 PM

2.163. by Sculptor1

2.137. by GE Morton

Really? The "state of the art" in AI technology refers to the extent of knowledge in that field. Knowledge is physical? And what do the laws of physics tell us about the contemporary music scene?

Of course. Do you think there would be any knowledge without brains, books, and other media?

You're ignoring the obvious in order to defend a naive ontology.

Again . . . really? Please explain just how the mental state of, say, thinking about where to go for dinner "cashes out" physically --- what tests or examinations of brain tissue or activity will reveal that.

Well try to decide where to go without your brain. And you will have your question answered.

You're confounding two issues. I haven't denied that mental phenomena (knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.) are dependent upon physical systems, are products of physical systems. I fully acknowledge that, which is obvious. But they are not predictable from the observable structure and activities of those systems, or from the physical laws governing their behavior, and certainly not identical with those physical processes.

A point of clarity: while we cannot predict the "mental phenomena" a physical system of the right type will produce, we can, I think, predict that it will produce some (if it is of the right type).

CHAPTER 2.173.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:48 PM

2.170. by Terrapin Station

The explanation was given above (and I've given it countless times here): properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points.

Well, that "explanation" explains nothing, and cannot, proceeding as it does from a false premise: "properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points."

You apparently don't know what a *property* of a thing is.

CHAPTER 2.174.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:57 PM

2.170. by Terrapin Station

2.168. by Gertie

TS

You are talking about a way of describing the distinction. What is the explanation?

The explanation was given above (and I've given it countless times here): properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points. There's a difference (in properties) from the spatiotemporal reference point of being a brain (or being a set of mental brain states more specifically) versus observing a brain from another spatiotemporal reference point that isn't identical to the brain in question.

It's pointless just repeating a change of perspective somehow means a change of perspective happens, when you're asked to explain *how* that could account for phenomenal experience.

We have explanations for how a subject's perspective changing will change the ways a subject experiences an object (I turn my head and the world shifts, I look back a minute later and I notice changes). This can be explained, but not in ways which explain the Subject-Object distinction.

So *how* does a change of perspective *explain* the Subject-Object distinction.

CHAPTER 2.175.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:57 PM

2.164. by Terrapin Station

There isn't a shape "from no reference point."

Er, yes, there is. E.g., the shape of the Earth is (roughly) spherical. The shape of the Egyptian pyramids is pyramidal. They have those shapes from all reference points, and they do not depend upon any reference point. The shape of a physical object is a property of that object. It is not a

relation between the thing and an observer, or between the thing and some external reference point.

CHAPTER 2.176.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 4:58 PM



2.172. by GE Morton

2.163. by Sculptor1

Of course. Do you think there would be any knowledge without brains, books, and other media?

Well try to decide where to go without your brain. And you will have your question answered.

You're confounding two issues. I haven't denied that mental phenomena (knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.) are dependent upon physical systems, are products of physical systems. I fully acknowledge that, which is obvious. But they are not predictable from the observable structure and activities of those systems, or from the physical laws governing their behavior, and certainly not identical with those physical processes.

A point of clarity: while we cannot predict the "mental phenomena" a physical system of the right type will produce, we can, I think, predict that it will produce some (if it is of the right type).

I think you mean conflating, not confounding.

Confounding is what you seem to be attempting with your disingenuous answer.

Since I was responding to a critique of "*There is no distinction. The state of the art is cashed out in physicality, exactly like mental states.*"

I think it utterly disingenuous of you now to claim that you "haven't denied that mental phenomena (knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.) are dependent upon physical systems, are products of physical systems. "

Why attack a statement you now claim you agree with?

Unless you are trying to persist in the mystification of mentality by introducing some incorporeal element to it. Which would be more honest at least.

CHAPTER 2.177.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:16 PM

2.122. by Sculptor1

*Instead we live with a series of representations which approximate the world in ways effective enough to be physically logical.
Is this what you mean?*

Actually, we can't say that our conceptions/representations of the world "approximate" it, either. We would only be justified in so claiming if we could compare those conceptions with the "noumena," which we can't do. All we can say is that those conceptions are good enough to enable us to function in that world.

Or are you drawing too many distinctions. If you say that the quale is a state which in turn represents surely you are just adding another unnecessary layer here? Surely the quale is the experience of the sensory input.

Yes; the quale is the unique, distinctive experience I have when (say) perceiving a red rose. It represents, to the conscious mind, the output of a specific brain process (of which we're oblivious when we're admiring the rose). Qualia are pretty hard to do away with; they make up the lion's share of our waking experience.

CHAPTER 2.178.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:31 PM

2.176. by Sculptor1

2.172. by GE Morton

You're confounding two issues. I haven't denied that mental phenomena (knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.) are dependent upon physical systems, are products of physical systems. I fully acknowledge that, which is obvious. But they are not predictable from the observable structure and activities of those systems, or from the physical laws governing their behavior, and certainly not identical with those physical processes.

A point of clarity: while we cannot predict the "mental phenomena" a physical system of the right type will produce, we can, I think, predict that it will produce some (if it is of the right type).

I think you mean conflating, not confounding.

Confounding is what you seem to be attempting with your disingenuous answer.

Since I was responding to a critique of "There is no distinction. The state of the art is cashed out in physicality, exactly like mental states."

I think it utterly disingenuous of you now to claim that you "haven't denied that mental phenomena (knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.) are dependent upon physical systems, are products of physical systems."

Why attack a statement you now claim you agree with?

Methinks you lost the thread of the discussion. Let me refresh:

YOU: No, these are all physical.

ME: Really? The "state of the art" in AI technology refers to the extent of knowledge in that field. Knowledge is physical? And what do the laws of physics tell us about the contemporary music scene?

YOU: Of course. Do you think there would be any knowledge without brains, books, and other media?

You had claimed that knowledge, contemporary music scenes, etc., were "physical." I challenged that. Then you responded with a reply that implies that they *depend* upon physical systems, with which I agree. But that is a different claim.

Being produced by, or dependent upon, a physical system not necessarily make the products physical. Your reply, "Of course. Do you think there would be any knowledge without brains, books, and other media?" confounds those two questions.

CHAPTER 2.179.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:47 PM



2.171. by Gertie

2.169. by Terrapin Station

How are brains a "known experiencing system" on your view if mentality (at least a la experience, then) isn't physical/isn't identical to brain states?

I don't know how brains experience, just like you don't.

In other words, I'm asking *why you'd say* that brains are a "known experiencing system" if mentality isn't physical/isn't identical to brain states on your view.

CHAPTER 2.180.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:49 PM



2.173. by GE Morton

2.170. by Terrapin Station

The explanation was given above (and I've given it countless times here): properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points.

Well, that "explanation" explains nothing, and cannot, proceeding as it does from a false premise: "properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points."

You apparently don't know what a property of a thing is.

What happened to all the stuff I asked you that you simply ignored. Start with this:

There isn't a shape "from no reference point." I wrote this already. If you're going to disagree with it, you need to explain how there's a shape from no reference point.

The explanation of how there's a shape from no reference point is?

CHAPTER 2.181.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:51 PM



2.174. by Gertie

2.170. by Terrapin Station

The explanation was given above (and I've given it countless times here): properties of any x are different from different spatiotemporal reference points. There's a difference (in properties) from the spatiotemporal reference point of being a brain (or being a set of mental brain states more specifically) versus observing a brain from another spatiotemporal reference point that isn't identical to the brain in question.

It's pointless just repeating a change of perspective somehow means a change of perspective happens, when you're asked to explain how that could account for phenomenal experience.

I wrote the answer in what you're quoting: "**properties of any x are different** from different spatiotemporal reference points."

CHAPTER 2.182.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:55 PM

2.175. by GE Morton



2.164. by Terrapin Station

There isn't a shape "from no reference point."

Er, yes, there is. E.g., the shape of the Earth is (roughly) spherical. The shape of the Egyptian pyramids is pyramidal. They have those shapes from all reference points, and they do not depend upon any reference point. The shape of a physical object is a property of that object. It is not a relation between the thing and an observer, or between the thing and some external reference point.

That's an answer that reads like, "Let's try anything we can think of."

First off, "have those shapes from all reference points" isn't a shape from **no** reference point, is it?

"The Earth is spherical" -- how does that property obtain, exactly? Here's a common definition of "sphere": "a round solid figure, or its surface, with every point on its surface equidistant from its center."

"From its center" is a spatiotemporal reference point. But you're saying it has a shape from no reference point, right? So you couldn't use "from its center." So how does the property of "spherical" obtain from no reference point?

CHAPTER 2.183.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:58 PM



2.178. by GE Morton

ME: Really? The "state of the art" in AI technology refers to the extent of knowledge in that field. Knowledge is physical? And what do the laws of physics tell us about the contemporary music scene?

I'm guessing that you're the source of the confusion of many persons on this board about this stuff. "x is physical" doesn't amount to "the laws of physics tell us about it."

CHAPTER 2.184.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 6:11 PM

2.167. by Gertie

OK. So what does it mean to say neurons, chemicals, etc present that model they've produced to themselves?

I don't think I said (quite) that. I said that brains create a virtual model of the organism of which it is a part, including itself, and of the environment in which it finds itself. That model becomes the subjective "me" and the external world as perceived.

The upshot here, important for AI, is that any system which can create a dynamic, virtual model of itself and its environment, constantly updated in real time, and choose its actions based on scenarios run in the model, will be "conscious."

Well that would depend on whether that recreates the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiential states to manifest, and while we know brains have them, we don't know what those conditions are. They might be substrate dependent (see for example [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra... %20neurons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra...%20neurons)).

Heh. I've read Penrose's *Emperor's New Mind*. A thought-provoking book, but the theory is so speculative and so dependent upon controversial quantum theoretical phenomena that it is not likely to spur much interest any time soon. It can't be ruled out, of course, but the solution is probably much simpler.

Right. And when Dennett says we have to talk about consciousness in functional terms, he's saying he can't explain it any other way. And I think that's because of what Chalmers calls The Hard Problem, which Dennett denies exists. Or "dissolves" – which I suppose it does if you ignore it. How can you be a materialist which is an ontological account rooted in matter and the smaller bits of matter it's reducible to, and just ignore the biggest problem this raises re experience...

I agree. That "Hard Problem" is real, but the solution is (fairly) simple, and does not require dualism or mysticism. At the same time, some aspects of it will be permanently inexplicable --- even if we invent an AI system that passes the Turing test.

I don't find the functional approach to phenomenal consciousness satisfactory. It might or might not work to produce an experiencing machine, but it'll be by imitating certain functional features of a known experiencing system (brains), not by explaining it in the way reductionism might. Hence the problem of how to test AI for phenomenal experience – we won't know if reproducing that model making function has captured the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiencing. We might only have created a machine which is very good at mimicking experiential states, and is incapable of understanding and correctly answering questions about feelings, thinking, seeing, etc. We should still def be trying it to see what happens of course, it's a possible practical way forward.

You have to keep in mind that those questions you would ask of the "experience machine" apply just as well to humans. I can only know that you are a conscious creature, a "thinking machine," via your behavior. I have no more access to your "inner world" than I would of that machine. That is just the nature of the beast --- the subjective experience of a conscious system, biological or electronic, will be intrinsically, impenetrably private. We can only impute inner phenomena to it by inferences from its behavior.

CHAPTER 2.185.

~

2.182. by Terrapin Station

First off, "have those shapes from all reference points" isn't a shape from no reference point, is it?

Yes, it is. "From all reference points" implies that reference points are irrelevant to the shape of the Earth. It's shape is not dependent upon any reference point.

"The Earth is spherical" -- how does that property obtain, exactly? Here's a common definition of "sphere": "a round solid figure, or its surface, with every point on its surface equidistant from its center."

"From its center" is a spatiotemporal reference point. But you're saying it has a shape from no reference point, right? So you couldn't use "from its center." So how does the property of "spherical" obtain from no reference point?

We use a reference point to define a sphere, in order to convey how to go about constructing one. The shape of the Earth does not depend that reference point, or upon our definition of "sphere."

This sidetrack is too silly to continue, TP. I'm done with it.

CHAPTER 2.186.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 6:38 PM



2.185. by GE Morton

We use a reference point to define a sphere, in order to convey how to go about constructing one. The shape of the Earth does not depend that reference point, or upon our definition of "sphere."

So the explanation of how it has a shape from no reference point when we use a reference point to define a sphere in the first place is?

CHAPTER 2.187.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 6:43 PM

2.184. by GE Morton

brains create a virtual model of the organism of which it is a part, including itself, and of the environment in which it finds itself. That model becomes the subjective "me" and the external world as perceived.

What is that virtual model made of, where does it exist?

CHAPTER 2.188.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 7:13 PM



2.185. by GE Morton

By the way, if you won't address this (So the explanation of how it has a shape from no reference point when we use a reference point to define a sphere in the first place is?), we'll surely wind up doing this all over again, because our disagreement over the brain/mind relationship boils down to a disagreement over this ontological issue, and if we can't get down to the brass tacks of this ontological issue, it's just going to keep cropping up again every time the brain/mind relationship comes up.

CHAPTER 2.189.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 10:57 PM

2.187. by Atla

2.184. by GE Morton

brains create a virtual model of the organism of which it is a part, including itself, and of the environment in which it finds itself. That model becomes the subjective "me" and the external world as perceived.

What is that virtual model made of, where does it exist?

It exists in your brain. If you destroy the brain you destroy the model. It is made of "virtual stuff" -- non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable "stuff" that emerges from certain cybernetic systems, much like an electromagnetic field emerges from an operating electric motor. It is field effect of those systems.

CHAPTER 2.190.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:04 PM

I said, "It is field effect of those systems."

Should have said, more conservatively, "You can think of it as a field effect of those systems."

CHAPTER 2.191.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 11:08 PM

2.188. by Terrapin Station

2.185. by GE Morton

By the way, if you won't address this (So the explanation of how it has a shape from no reference point when we use a reference point to define a sphere in the first place is?), we'll surely wind up doing this all over again, because our disagreement over the brain/mind relationship boils down to a disagreement over this ontological issue, and if we can't get down to the brass tacks of this ontological issue, it's just going to keep cropping up again every time the brain/mind relationship comes up.

You need to jettison that ontology of yours, TP. It is incoherent, nonsensical, and leads to numerous *reductio ad absurdums*, which I've pointed out before.

CHAPTER 2.192.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 12:44 AM



2.191. by GE Morton

2.188. by Terrapin Station

By the way, if you won't address this (So the explanation of how it has a shape from no reference point when we use a reference point to define a sphere in the first place is?), we'll surely wind up doing this all over again, because our disagreement over the brain/mind relationship boils down to a disagreement over this ontological issue, and if we can't get down to the brass tacks of this ontological issue, it's just going to keep cropping up again every time the brain/mind relationship comes up.

*You need to jettison that ontology of yours, TP. It is incoherent, nonsensical, and leads to numerous *reductio ad absurdums*, which I've pointed out before.*

You know what you'd need to do? You'd need to be able to actually address my objections to your objections, starting with explaining how a shape would obtain from no reference point.

CHAPTER 2.193.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 5:01 AM

2.189. by GE Morton

2.187. by Atla

What is that virtual model made of, where does it exist?

It exists in your brain. If you destroy the brain you destroy the model. It is made of "virtual stuff" --- non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable "stuff" that emerges from certain cybernetic systems, much like an electromagnetic field emerges from an operating electric motor. It is field effect of those systems.

Electromagnetic fields are physical and analyzable. They may not be tangible for us in the everyday sense, but I wouldn't call them ephemeral. So that would mean that the model is in fact physically identical to a part of the brain.

If you want to start working on the Hard problem, you first have to discard ideas that probably don't work. Strong emergence is a good example of it, here we pretend that the whole is more than the sum of the parts, in short it's a scientifically accepted version of magic. We are still at square one, trying to bridge the explanatory gap, and we are still fully involved in dualism, we simply convince ourselves that we aren't.

CHAPTER 2.194.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 11:55 AM



2.189. by GE Morton

2.187. by Atla

What is that virtual model made of, where does it exist?

It exists in your brain. If you destroy the brain you destroy the model. It is made of "virtual stuff" --- non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable "stuff" that emerges from certain cybernetic systems, much like an electromagnetic field emerges from an operating electric motor. It is field effect of those systems.

So first, you'd need to clarify whether the "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" exists in brains or extends beyond them, you need to deal with the problem, mentioned by Atla below, that electromagnetic fields are *not* "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff,'" so you'd need to explain what makes the difference, and you'd need to give any sort of good reason to believe there is anything such as "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" in the first place, because it does indeed sound like "it's magic!" or "it's God!"-caliber "we need an explanation now! So I'm going with this" nonsense.

CHAPTER 2.195.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 12:23 PM



Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now? 🤔

CHAPTER 2.196.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 12:48 PM

2.194. by Terrapin Station

2.189. by GE Morton

It exists in your brain. If you destroy the brain you destroy the model. It is made of "virtual stuff" -- non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable "stuff" that emerges from certain cybernetic systems, much like an electromagnetic field emerges from an operating electric motor. It is field effect of those systems.

So first, you'd need to clarify whether the "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" exists in brains or extends beyond them, you need to deal with the problem, mentioned by Atla below, that electromagnetic fields are not "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff,'" so you'd need to explain what makes the difference, and you'd need to give any sort of good reason to believe there is anything such as "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" in the first place, because it does indeed sound like "it's magic!" or "it's God!"-caliber "we need an explanation now! So I'm going with this" nonsense.

What Atla mentioned was based on the Hard problem though, which presupposes a general understanding of how physics even works, and what the explanatory gap is - things you have yet to demonstrate.

CHAPTER 2.197.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 12:55 PM



2.196. by Atla

2.194. by Terrapin Station

So first, you'd need to clarify whether the "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" exists in brains or extends beyond them, you need to deal with the problem, mentioned by Atla below, that electromagnetic fields are not "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff,'" so you'd need to explain what makes the difference, and you'd need to give any sort of good reason to believe there is anything such as "non-tangible, ephemeral, unanalyzable 'stuff'" in the first place, because it does indeed sound like "it's magic!" or "it's God!"-caliber "we need an explanation now! So I'm going with this" nonsense.

What Atla mentioned was based on the Hard problem though, which presupposes a general understanding of how physics even works, and what the explanatory gap is - things you have yet to demonstrate.

I wasn't about to start campaigning for a broken clock.

CHAPTER 2.198.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:00 PM

1.196. by Terrapin Station

1.195. by evolution

But you write considerable amounts as though you KNOW about things objectively. Sure, as if I know what the deal is about a lot of objective things. And indeed that's the case. What's the issue?

You are mostly WRONG.

CHAPTER 2.199.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:05 PM



2.198. by evolution

1.196. by Terrapin Station

Sure, as if I know what the deal is about a lot of objective things. And indeed that's the case. What's the issue?

You are mostly WRONG.

I think I'm right, you think I'm wrong. You think you're right, I think you're wrong. You're not just figuring this out now, are you?

CHAPTER 2.200.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:18 PM

2.199. by Terrapin Station

2.198. by evolution

*You are mostly WRONG.
I think I'm right, you think I'm wrong.*

ONCE AGAIN, you are COMPLETELY and UTTERLY WRONG.

When will you STOP ASSUMING and BEING SO continuously WRONG?

Most of the time I do NOT 'think' you are wrong. I KNOW you are WRONG.

by Terrapin Station

You think you're right, I think you're wrong. You're not just figuring this out now, are you?

But the difference is I can PROVE when you are WRONG. BUT, you can NOT do the same with 'Me'.

CHAPTER 2.201.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:27 PM



(It's been 7 pages since this first appeared and it was only the day before yesterday. This topic is

nothing if not popular.)

Pattern-chaser wrote: Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now?

If science did achieve hegemony, I wonder who the president/emperor/prime minister/duce should be. I wonder how things would go if an attempt to rule purely according to scientific principles were made. Would it be like when Spock has to take over as captain and things quickly go pear-shaped because he lacks the necessary interpersonal skills?

CHAPTER 2.202.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:41 PM



2.200. by evolution


Most of the time I do NOT 'think' you are wrong. I KNOW you are WRONG.

Knowing that P is a matter of believing (where the belief is justified and true) that P. Belief is a type of thought.

So if one knows that P, one thinks that P.

CHAPTER 2.203.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 2:52 PM



Re evolution, I'm well aware that you like to believe that you have no beliefs, by the way.

CHAPTER 2.204.

~

Atla on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 3:02 PM

2.195. by Pattern-chaser

Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now?

I guess my original point about Dennett was, that qualia eliminativism is one of the most absurd ideas of all time though. A good example of what can happen when people (want to) confuse scientific third-person-view instrumentalism with fundamental ontology.

There is no fundamental ontology without qualia playing a central role in it. Phenomenology however seems to take it into the opposite absurd extreme. 😊 The answers lie in between.

CHAPTER 2.205.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 3:11 PM

2.202. by Terrapin Station

2.200. by evolution

Most of the time I do NOT 'think' you are wrong. I KNOW you are WRONG.

Knowing that P is a matter of believing (where the belief is justified and true) that P. Belief is a type of thought.

So if one knows that P, one thinks that P.

SEE, from my perspective, you are just completely and utterly WRONG, AGAIN.

Knowing that P is NOT NECESSARILY a matter of 'believing' ANY thing at all.

If I KNOW some thing, then I KNOW it. And, I do NOT 'have to' believe it.

There is also a very strong distinction between 'thinking' P, or some thing, and 'knowing' P, or some thing. Obviously. This is WHY there are two distinct different words, with distinctively different definitions, and/or meanings.

CHAPTER 2.206.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 3:13 PM

2.203. by Terrapin Station

Re evolution, I'm well aware that you like to believe that you have no beliefs, by the way.

But I JUST have NO beliefs.

You just ASSUME and/or BELIEVE otherwise, correct?

CHAPTER 2.207.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 3:14 PM

2.204. by Atla

2.195. by Pattern-chaser

Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now?

I guess my original point about Dennett was, that qualia eliminativism is one of the most absurd ideas of all time though. A good example of what can happen when people (want to) confuse scientific third-person-view instrumentalism with fundamental ontology.

There is no fundamental ontology without qualia playing a central role in it. Phenomenology however seems to take it into the opposite absurd extreme. The answers lie in between.

That is the 'true' answers 'lie' in between.

CHAPTER 2.208.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 5:44 PM

2.205. by evolution

If I KNOW some thing, then I KNOW it.

Is that your philosophical analysis of what knowledge is?

CHAPTER 2.209.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 6:46 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.204. by Atla

There is no fundamental ontology without qualia playing a central role in it.

Then I guess fundamental ontology must be a bogus as qualia, if that is the case.

But it isn't. Those of us who think qualia are a silly idea only philosophers would invent can do just fine in other areas of philosophy, including ontology.



~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:13 PM

GE

OK. So what does it mean to say neurons, chemicals, etc present that model they've produced to themselves?

I don't think I said (quite) that. I said that brains create a virtual model of the organism of which it is a part, including itself, and of the environment in which it finds itself. That model becomes the subjective "me" and the external world as perceived.

Yes I understood that part. I'm still confused about the final part of the process, how this model is 'presented' to the brain/consciousness or somesuch.

If the model is a product of the brain, a separate thing like steam from a train, how is the brain 'aware' of its contents? Or how does the model 'present itself' to the brain? The model/product is what's made of the seeing and thinking experiencing stuff, right? So the physical brain isn't 'looking' at the experiential product like a little homunculus in a Cartesian theatre - Dennett rightly dismisses that. So how does the communication from the experiential model back to the model maker brain work, in order to take the appropriate physical action?

Well that would depend on whether that recreates the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiential states to manifest, and while we know brains have them, we don't know what those conditions are. They might be substrate dependent (see for example [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra ... %20neurons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestra...%20neurons)).

Heh. I've read Penrose's Emperor's New Mind. A thought-provoking book, but the theory is so speculative and so dependent upon controversial quantum theoretical phenomena that it is not likely to spur much interest any time soon. It can't be ruled out, of course, but the solution is probably much simpler.

I've tried to watch some of his talks, waaay over my head. But I have a hunch that if anybody's going to crack this it will be somebody with the scientific chops and open-mindedness of a Penrose.

The point re multiple realisability stands tho - if you don't have an explanation which covers basics like necessary and sufficient conditions, how do you know you're not missing something necessary which is a feature of biological brains, their chemistry and so on. Simply including the model maker in the model, and copying functional processes and dynamic complex patterns of interactions might not be enough.

Right. And when Dennett says we have to talk about consciousness in functional terms, he's saying he can't explain it any other way. And I think that's because of what Chalmers calls The Hard Problem, which Dennett denies exists. Or "dissolves" – which I suppose it does if you ignore it. How can you be a materialist which is an ontological account rooted in matter and the smaller bits of matter it's reducible to, and just ignore the biggest problem this raises re experience...

I agree. That "Hard Problem" is real,

but the solution is (fairly) simple, and does not require dualism or mysticism. At the same time, some aspects of it will be permanently inexplicable --- even if we invent an AI system that passes the Turing test.

And the solution is??

I don't find the functional approach to phenomenal consciousness satisfactory. It might or might not work to produce an experiencing machine, but it'll be by imitating certain functional features of a known experiencing system (brains), not by explaining it in the way reductionism might. Hence the problem of how to test AI for phenomenal experience – we won't know if reproducing that model making function has captured the necessary and sufficient conditions for experiencing. We might only have created a machine which is very good at mimicking experiential states, and is incapable of understanding and correctly answering questions about feelings, thinking, seeing, etc. We should still def be trying it to see what happens of course, it's a possible practical way forward.

You have to keep in mind that those questions you would ask of the "experience machine" apply just as well to humans. I can only know that you are a conscious creature, a "thinking machine," via your behavior. I have no more access to your "inner world" than I would of that machine. That is just the nature of the beast --- the subjective experience of a conscious system, biological or electronic, will be intrinsically, impenetrably private. We can only impute inner phenomena to it by inferences from its behavior.

Not only from behaviour, also self reports, and crucially here, inference from analogy.

I can assume that you're a conscious being not only from your observable behaviour and self-reports – the tests we can also hope to apply to AI. But also from analogy based on our physical similarity. We're made of the same observable stuff and processes, with some minor variations. So it's reasonable to assume that if I'm conscious, you are too. We don't know if AI will capture the necessary conditions for experience, because we don't know if any are located in the shared biological substrate you and I have. (And if it does, we can't be sure we'd recognise it if the particular nature of substrates play a role in the particular nature of experience).

CHAPTER 2.211.

~

GE Morton on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:16 PM

2.193. by Atla

Electromagnetic fields are physical and analyzable.

Analyzable, yes. Physical? Sort of. "Fields" (gravitational, magnetic, electrical) are all *theoretical constructs* invented to explain various types of action-at-a-distance (e.g., the ability of a magnet to move a body some distance away from it). We can't see, touch, or measure any of those fields directly; we can only observe and measure the effects they are invoked to explain. They are pretty ephemeral.

So that would mean that the model is in fact physically identical to a part of the brain.

Well, you can call an effect of a process a part of the processing mechanism if you wish, but that would be somewhat unconventional. I don't think the Earth's magnetic or gravitational fields are treated as part of the planet in most geology texts. Those would be covered in astronomy or physics texts.

If you want to start working on the Hard problem, you first have to discard ideas that probably don't work. Strong emergence is a good example of it, here we pretend that the whole is more than the sum of the parts, in short it's a scientifically accepted version of magic. We are still at square one, trying to bridge the explanatory gap, and we are still fully involved in dualism, we simply convince ourselves that we aren't.

I share your sentiments there, and your skepticism of "emergence." It sounds very much like a "just so" story, and like magic.

But we need to grasp what makes the Hard Problem hard. *It is hard because the phenomena we are trying to explain is intrinsically subjective and private.* That means that scientific method, as usually understood, is inapplicable to it and impotent to solve it. Scientific method presupposes, and depends upon, publicly observable phenomena, things we can describe in publicly verifiable ways using terms with agreed upon meanings, things within our common experience which we can weigh, measure, manipulate, analyze, compare with other things, things for which we can obtain repeatable, consistent answers to the questions we pose about them. In short, science is a *public* methodology for investigating *public* phenomena.

So the problem is more severe than mere irreducibility; it defies the fundamental assumptions and prerequisites of science itself. How can we explain a phenomenon we cannot observe or describe objectively, cannot measure or analyze, from known scientific facts or principles, or derive it from them?

Yet "mental" phenomena --- thoughts, impressions, feelings, qualia, ideas, knowledge, etc., etc. --- are undeniable; we all experience them (strictly speaking, we only experience our own mental phenomena, but we assume that other creatures do as well), and we talk about those phenomena, meaningfully, all the time. And being inquisitive creatures we're driven to try to explain them.

So what to do?

The best we can do, I think, is a functional explanation. We can investigate the necessary and sufficient conditions for consciousness to appear --- we can handle that scientifically; we know quite a bit about that. But just how and why those conditions produce that effect will forever remain an unanswerable question. We can, somewhat wistfully or metaphorically, describe it as a field effect, an emergent effect, or just magic. But we'll have to accept it as "brute fact."

It will not be the only "brute fact" we're forced to accept without explanation. We can't explain why a particular radium atom fissions at a certain time; we can't explain why the speed of light is C ; we can't explain why the Big Bang happened (if it did).

There is another interesting reason for supposing that consciousness will never be fully explicable scientifically. Our scientific understanding of ourselves and the universe is a conceptual model we have created. But no system can completely model itself, or anything larger than itself. That would require a system larger than the system to be modeled.

Just some thoughts.

CHAPTER 2.212.

~

GE Morton on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:21 PM

2.210. by Gertie

Yes I understood that part. I'm still confused about the final part of the process, how this model is 'presented' to the brain/consciousness or somesuch.

If the model is a product of the brain, a separate thing like steam from a train, how is the brain 'aware' of its contents? Or how does the model 'present itself' to the brain? The model/product is what's made of the seeing and thinking experiencing stuff, right? So the physical brain isn't 'looking' at the experiential product like a little homunculus in a Cartesian theatre - Dennett rightly dismisses that. So how does the communication from the experiential model back to the model maker brain work, in order to take the appropriate physical action?

More later, but see response to Alta below.

CHAPTER 2.213.

~

GE Morton on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:22 PM

Or, I guess it's "above."

CHAPTER 2.214.

~

Atla on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:42 PM

2.209. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.204. by Atla

There is no fundamental ontology without qualia playing a central role in it.

Then I guess fundamental ontology must be a bogus as qualia, if that is the case.

But it isn't. Those of us who think qualia are a silly idea only philosophers would invent can do just fine in other areas of philosophy, including ontology.

Well at least that's what you tell yourself.

CHAPTER 2.215.

~

Atla on  Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:43 PM

2.211. by GE Morton

2.193. by Atla

Electromagnetic fields are physical and analyzable.

Analyzable, yes. Physical? Sort of. "Fields" (gravitational, magnetic, electrical) are all theoretical constructs invented to explain various types of action-at-a-distance (e.g., the ability of a magnet to move a body some distance away from it). We can't see, touch, or measure any of those fields directly; we can only observe and measure the effects they are invoked to explain. They are pretty ephemeral.

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Well, you can call an effect of a process a part of the processing mechanism if you wish, but that would be somewhat unconventional. I don't think the Earth's magnetic or gravitational fields are treated as part of the planet in most geology texts. Those would be covered in astronomy or physics texts.

If you want to start working on the Hard problem, you first have to discard ideas that probably don't work. Strong emergence is a good example of it, here we pretend that the whole is more than the sum of the parts, in short it's a scientifically accepted version of magic. We are still at square one, trying to bridge the explanatory gap, and we are still fully involved in dualism, we simply convince ourselves that we aren't.

I share your sentiments there, and your skepticism of "emergence." It sounds very much like a "just so" story, and like magic.

But we need to grasp what makes the Hard Problem hard. It is hard because the phenomena we are trying to explain is intrinsically subjective and private. That means that scientific method, as usually understood, is inapplicable to it and impotent to solve it. Scientific method presupposes, and depends upon, publicly observable phenomena, things we can describe in publicly verifiable ways using terms with agreed upon meanings, things within our common experience which we can weigh, measure, manipulate, analyze, compare with other things, things for which we can obtain repeatable, consistent answers to the questions we pose about them. In short, science is a public methodology for investigating public phenomena.

So the problem is more severe than mere irreducibility; it defies the fundamental assumptions and prerequisites of science itself. How can we explain a phenomenon we cannot observe or describe objectively, cannot measure or analyze, from known scientific facts or principles, or derive it from them?

Yet "mental" phenomena --- thoughts, impressions, feelings, qualia, ideas, knowledge, etc., etc. --- are undeniable; we all experience them (strictly speaking, we only experience our own mental phenomena, but we assume that other creatures do as well), and we talk about those phenomena, meaningfully, all the time. And being inquisitive creatures we're driven to try to explain them.

So what to do?

The best we can do, I think, is a functional explanation. We can investigate the necessary and sufficient conditions for consciousness to appear --- we can handle that scientifically; we know quite a bit about that. But just how and why those conditions produce that effect will forever remain an unanswerable question. We can, somewhat wistfully or metaphorically, describe it as a field effect, an emergent effect, or just magic. But we'll have to accept it as "brute fact."

It will not be the only "brute fact" we're forced to accept without explanation. We can't explain why a particular radium atom fissions at a certain time; we can't explain why the speed of light is C; we can't explain why the Big Bang happened (if it did).

There is another interesting reason for supposing that consciousness will never be fully explicable scientifically. Our scientific understanding of ourselves and the universe is a conceptual model we have created. But no system can completely model itself, or anything larger than itself. That would require a system larger than the system to be modeled.

Just some thoughts.

Physical fields aren't ephemeral, they are just as real as say protons (which technically are also theoretical constructs btw). Another way to look at it is that everything is fields, particles are merely excitations of fields. So we run into the physical-mental identity issue.

Functionalism is merely abstraction, it doesn't really address the issue.

The idea that qualia/existence itself only happens when certain conditions are met, is a very intuitive and widespread, but highly irrational, illogical belief without evidence.

CHAPTER 2.216.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:46 PM

I meant to write qualia/experience itself

CHAPTER 2.217.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 7:59 PM

2.211. by GE Morton

Analyzable, yes. Physical? Sort of. "Fields" (gravitational, magnetic, electrical) are all theoretical constructs invented to explain various types of action-at-a-distance (e.g., the ability of a magnet to move a body some distance away from it). We can't see, touch, or measure any of those fields directly; we can only observe and measure the effects they are invoked to explain. They are pretty ephemeral.



Surely you don't think that physics is positing fields as something either nonphysical or epiphenomenal though, do you?

CHAPTER 2.218.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, September 11, 2020 at 8:33 PM

2.212. by GE Morton

2.210. by Gertie

Yes I understood that part. I'm still confused about the final part of the process, how this model is 'presented' to the brain/consciousness or somesuch.

If the model is a product of the brain, a separate thing like steam from a train, how is the brain 'aware' of its contents? Or how does the model 'present itself' to the brain? The model/product is what's made of the seeing and thinking experiencing stuff, right? So the physical brain isn't 'looking' at the experiential product like a little homunculus in a Cartesian theatre - Dennett rightly dismisses that. So how does the communication from the experiential model back to the model maker brain work, in order to take the appropriate physical action?

More later, but see response to Alta below.

I pretty much agree with this (hadn't read it when I was composing my post), but it's potentially an area philosophy can contribute to, *because* science doesn't seem to have the appropriate toolkit. And might come up with something potentially testable or an explanation which seems overwhelmingly compelling.

If Dennett said something like the above, acknowledged the Hard Problem and then went on to say 'but we can still come up with a functional account, and here's how it could go....' I'd say fine. But he makes grandiose claims and then obfuscates entertainingly (or frustratingly in my case) till you hopefully forget that he's claimed he's 'explained consciousness', or 'consciousness is an illusion'.

And I do see probs with AI as a practical way forward in furthering our understanding, as mentioned in my reply above.

(Btw I tried the Levine paper, but I really struggle getting my head round contingency and possible worlds type approaches, just doesn't suit how I conceptualise problems I think. Likewise I don't see the value in Chalmers' Zombie argument, it just escapes me. Your few paras above make the explanatory gap point well imo).

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 1 9 .

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 12:41 AM

2.209. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.204. by Atla

There is no fundamental ontology without qualia playing a central role in it.

Then I guess fundamental ontology must be a bogus as qualia, if that is the case.

But it isn't. Those of us who think qualia are a silly idea only philosophers would invent can do just fine in other areas of philosophy, including ontology.

Methinks you are over-complicating qualia, automatically attaching connotations to the term that have accreted to it over the years via various philosophical speculations.

But it is an uncomplicated term that does not require any convoluted analysis or "ontological" explication. The term merely denotes the distinctive sensory impressions you experience when your nervous system delivers various types of signals to your consciousness, the impressions which allow you to differentiate between signals received over that channel and from other channels --- between the color of a rose blossom and the color of the plant's leaves. Qualia are the mode by which the brain presents those differentia to the perceiving mind. So you have a "quale" for red, another for green, another for the smell of cinnamon, for the taste of garlic, and so on. Assuming you can make all those distinctions, then you have "qualia." There is a mystery as to how those impressions, sensations, are produced by brains. But there is no mystery as to what the term denotes.

"Qualia" raise no "ontological" issues. They do not imply the existence of some sort of non-physical substance, and hence don't imply dualism. They are "physical" in the sense that they are generated by physical systems, and only by them (as far as we know). They are not manifestations of "spirits," "souls," or of any other "transcendental" phenomena. They are very much elements of our empirical world, indeed, the foundation of it.

You can't deny that qualia exist without denying that the sensory impressions the term denotes exist --- which would be stubbornly dogmatic and ridiculous.

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 2 0 .

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 1:47 AM

2.210. by Gertie

If the model is a product of the brain, a separate thing like steam from a train, how is the brain 'aware' of its contents? Or how does the model 'present itself' to the brain? The model/product is what's made of the seeing and thinking experiencing stuff, right? So the physical brain isn't 'looking' at the experiential product like a little homunculus in a Cartesian theatre - Dennett rightly dismisses that. So how does the communication from the experiential model back to the model maker brain work, in order to take the appropriate physical action?

The model does not present itself to the brain; the brain creates the model, which embraces the brain itself (imperfectly). It is not part of the brain, strictly speaking, any more than electrical field is part of the generator that produces it. But it is not entirely separate from the brain either. There is a continuous feedback circuit between the model and the (non-conscious) portions of the brain. Those portions deliver information to the model in real time, it is processed there, possible responses analyzed and evaluated, and the results delivered back to the appropriate portions of the brain, to undertake a task, control movement of the body, respond to a threat, etc. At times non-conscious portions of the brain can override the model, and force an action not consciously chosen (such as when it forces you to sleep). We can think of that model as Descartes' homunculus --- indeed, the "Cartesian Theater" concept is regaining favor among some psychologists and neurologists. See:

[https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog ... s-forgiven](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/s-forgiven)

I've also read the Crick/Koch paper mentioned in that article, and can probably find the link if you're interested.

Note that the existence of a dynamic, conceptual or "virtual" model of a system generated by that system nicely explains, unpacks, the concept of "self-awareness." So we can say, tentatively, that any system capable of doing that is *conscious*.

The point re multiple realizability stands tho - if you don't have an explanation which covers basics like necessary and sufficient conditions, how do you know you're not missing something necessary which is a feature of biological brains, their chemistry and so on. Simply including the model maker in the model, and copying functional processes and dynamic complex patterns of interactions might not be enough.

How and when do we know what is enough? If the AI can pass the Turing test, do we need anything more?

You have to keep in mind that those questions you would ask of the "experience machine" apply just as well to humans. I can only know that you are a conscious creature, a "thinking machine," via your behavior. I have no more access to your "inner world" than I would of that machine. That is just the nature of the beast --- the subjective experience of a conscious system, biological or electronic, will be intrinsically, impenetrably private. We can only impute inner phenomena to it by inferences from its behavior.

Not only from behaviour, also self reports, and crucially here, inference from analogy.

I can assume that you're a conscious being not only from your observable behaviour and self-reports - the tests we can also hope to apply to AI. But also from analogy based on our physical similarity. We're made of the same observable stuff and processes, with some minor variations. So it's reasonable to assume that if I'm conscious, you are too.

Think about that. A dead person, or a brain-dead person, is also made of the same stuff, but they are not conscious. I think we'd have to conclude that if a system can pass the Turing test and exhibit behaviors characteristic of known conscious creatures (us), even if through some sort of mechanical apparatus, then they, too, are conscious, and that the physical substrate of the system is irrelevant to that capacity.

CHAPTER 2.221.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 1:58 AM

2.220. by GE Morton

Think about that. A dead person, or a brain-dead person, is also made of the same stuff, but they are not conscious. I think we'd have to conclude that if a system can pass the Turing test and exhibit behaviors characteristic of known conscious creatures (us), even if through some sort of mechanical apparatus, then they, too, are conscious, and that the physical substrate of the system is irrelevant to that capacity.

Of course, if we are persistently unsuccessful in creating an electro-mechanical AI system that can pass the Turing test THEN we might wonder whether the biological substrate is somehow necessary for that capacity.

CHAPTER 2.222.

~

evolution on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 3:47 AM

2.208. by Terrapin Station

2.205. by evolution

*If I KNOW some thing, then I KNOW it.
Is that your philosophical analysis of what knowledge is?*

No.

CHAPTER 2.223.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 7:06 AM

2.220. by GE Morton

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog...s-forgiven>



That article doesn't forward the epiphenomenal nonsense you're suggesting. It forwards just the opposite. It does, however, suggest a Cartesian theatre/homunculus *model* as useful for capturing

phenomenal experience, particularly for psychotics and autistics, but it doesn't suggest that that model is literally true.

CHAPTER 2.224.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 7:15 AM



2.222. by evolution

2.208. by Terrapin Station

Is that your philosophical analysis of what knowledge is?

No.

What is your philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge?

CHAPTER 2.225.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 12:19 PM



Pattern-chaser wrote: Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now?

2.201. by Steve3007

If science did achieve hegemony, I wonder who the president/emperor/prime minister/duce should be. I wonder how things would go if an attempt to rule purely according to scientific principles were made. Would it be like when Spock has to take over as captain and things quickly go pear-shaped because he lacks the necessary interpersonal skills?

I think it's like that, but I'm not convinced that a simple lack of "interpersonal skills" gives a full explanation. Although it is certainly the case that we sometimes do not apply science when it is the appropriate tool (as sculptor1 observes), this topic concerns the opposite, when science is inappropriately applied. Aside from interpersonal skills, we might also consider subjects like

- metaphysics,
- art,
- culture,
- politics,
- beauty,
- religion,
- justice,
- good and evil,

- morals and ethics.

None of these subjects can be appropriately or usefully investigated using science and its techniques and methods. I'm sure there are other examples too.

A worldview based *solely* on science is incomplete, and I think that is, or would be, Captain Spock's problem. Even the great Vulcan himself once said “Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end.” Not everything can be understood by the application of science and logic *alone*.

Live long and prosper.

CHAPTER 2.226.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 3:35 PM



2.225. by Pattern-chaser

Pattern-chaser wrote: Does anyone have anything to say "on the absurd hegemony of science", or has that discussion finished now?

2.201. by Steve3007

If science did achieve hegemony, I wonder who the president/emperor/prime minister/duce should be. I wonder how things would go if an attempt to rule purely according to scientific principles were made. Would it be like when Spock has to take over as captain and things quickly go pear-shaped because he lacks the necessary interpersonal skills?

I think it's like that, but I'm not convinced that a simple lack of "interpersonal skills" gives a full explanation. Although it is certainly the case that we sometimes do not apply science when it is the appropriate tool (as @sculptor1 observes), this topic concerns the opposite, when science is inappropriately applied. Aside from interpersonal skills, we might also consider subjects like

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None of these subjects can be appropriately or usefully investigated using science and its techniques and methods. I'm sure there are other examples too.

A worldview based solely on science is incomplete, and I think that is, or would be, Captain Spock's problem. Even the great Vulcan himself once said "Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end." Not everything can be understood by the application of science and logic alone.

Live long and prosper.
Sculptor1

I would say that even science has a role to play in all of the above. But no way any kind of central role, and certainly cannot be used to offer moral conclusions.

Art can use science, for example. But that would be paint formulae; how to cast sculpture and make large sculptures structural.

Beauty can be measured by geometry, though this tends to offer cliché results.

Science can be used to completely unpack religious superstitions. I recently saw a meme linking forest fires in California with abortion cSculptor1

It's about appropriate usage.Sculptor1

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 3:36 PM



WTF is the "MENTION" function.
BLOODY ANNOYING

CHAPTER 2.228.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 3:41 PM

2.215. by Atla

Physical fields aren't ephemeral, they are just as real as say protons (which technically are also theoretical constructs btw). Another way to look at it is that everything is fields, particles are merely excitations of fields. So we run into the physical-mental identity issue.

"Ephemeral" was the wrong word; "ethereal" would have been better (indeed, "fields" are barely more substantial than the luminiferous ether). But I agree that fields (and protons, of course) are "real" --- because "reality" consists of those posited things which help us understand and explain our experience. If the virtual model idea furthers that aim then it will be "real" too.

Functionalism is merely abstraction, it doesn't really address the issue.

All theories are abstractions. I suspect you're assuming that only a reductive explanation "really" addresses the issue. But, for the reasons noted, no such explanation will ever be possible. So if we're ever going to explain phenomenal experience we need to approach the problem from a different direction.

The idea that qualia/existence itself only happens when certain conditions are met, is a very intuitive and widespread, but highly irrational, illogical belief without evidence.

Do you know of any instances where there that is not the case? How much evidence do you need? The inductive evidence for it is pretty compelling.

CHAPTER 2.229.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 4:08 PM

2.228. by GE Morton

"Ephemeral" was the wrong word; "ethereal" would have been better (indeed, "fields" are barely more substantial than the luminiferous ether). But I agree that fields (and protons, of course) are "real" --- because "reality" consists of those posited things which help us understand and explain our experience. If the virtual model idea furthers that aim then it will be "real" too.

All theories are abstractions. I suspect you're assuming that only a reductive explanation "really" addresses the issue. But, for the reasons noted, no such explanation will ever be possible. So if we're ever going to explain phenomenal experience we need to approach the problem from a different direction.

So then, again, we run into the mental-physical identity issue which you seem to have rejected. Of course I'm saying that identity is the only sensible way forward, reductionism solves nothing.

Do you know of any instances where there that is not the case? How much evidence do you need? The inductive evidence for it is pretty compelling.

Evidence for what? We can't measure qualia so there's no evidence for it.

However, the 'laws' or 'features' of nature tend to be universal, so why would there be an exception here? So the default idea is that qualia is universal, all these 'emergence out of complexity' etc. ideas are probably just bad philosophy.

And this is the start of the true inquiry into the Hard problem, it's a pretty deep rabbit hole.

CHAPTER 2.230.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 4:16 PM

2.217. by Terrapin Station

Surely you don't think that physics is positing fields as something either nonphysical or epiphenomenal though, do you?

Fields are "physical" because they are posited by physical theory. They are not "physical" in the everyday sense, which implies being tangible and having definite spacetime coordinates. Neither is true of fields (every such field extends to infinity, it just grows "weaker" with distance from the origin). They are "everywhere," and thus nowhere.

Yes, the virtual model theory is a version of epiphenomenalism. The central question in the (massive) debate regarding epiphenomenalism is whether mental phenomena, e.g., qualia, can have any causal role in physical processes. Yes, and no. What particular "quale" one experiences when beholding, say, a red rose is physically inefficacious and irrelevant. Hence we don't need to characterize it or analyze it. But the fact that we have one *is* causally efficacious --- it is what permits us to distinguish a red rose from a yellow one, and hence determines which one we pick. And that quale is what we do have when making that choice. We do not have any information about the physics of light or of whatever processes may be underway in our brains. That quale is all we have to work with.

CHAPTER 2.231.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 5:06 PM



2.230. by GE Morton

Fields are "physical" because they are posited by physical theory. They are not "physical" in the everyday sense, which implies being tangible and having definite spacetime coordinates. Neither is true of fields (every such field extends to infinity, it just grows "weaker" with distance from the origin). They are "everywhere," and thus nowhere.

"Physical" doesn't imply "tangible."

"Everywhere" doesn't imply "nowhere."

If you can't even get such simple ideas straight . . . geez, no wonder you're so confused.

CHAPTER 2.232.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 5:55 PM

2.231. by Terrapin Station

"Physical" doesn't imply "tangible."

Yes, it does, in the everyday sense:

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physical>

2a is the "everyday sense."

"Everywhere" doesn't imply "nowhere."

Yes, it does. Citing the spacetime coordinates of a thing is meaningful only if it enables us to locate the thing in a specific place. Something alleged to exist at all spacetime coordinates is indistinguishable from one which exists at no spacetime coordinates. "Omnipresence" is a vacuous concept.

CHAPTER 2.233.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 6:01 PM

2.230. by GE Morton

every such field extends to infinity, it just grows "weaker" with distance from the origin). They are "everywhere," and thus nowhere.

?! You seem to be confusing forces and fields.

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 3 4 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 6:15 PM

2.232. by GE Morton

Citing the spacetime coordinates of a thing is meaningful only if it enables us to locate the thing in a specific place. Something alleged to exist at all spacetime coordinates is indistinguishable from one which exists at no spacetime coordinates. "Omnipresence" is a vacuous concept.

Spacetime is also "omnipresent" then.

Fields exist at all spacetime coordinates, they can take different values from coordinate to coordinate. It makes no sense to say that they exist at no coordinates. Never mind

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 3 5 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 6:38 PM

GE

Re the linked paper

[And Koch is choosing to pursue the route of IIT, which he and Tononi suggest implies an underlying panpsychic ontology...]

My own view on the conscious/experiential self, is that brain architecture rules here. We might find the claustrum or somewhere else is something akin to a command and control centre all neural roads lead to and from. In charge of assessing the incoming sensory information, checking with memory etc, thinking through options and issuing instructions to motor systems. But there are competing ideas about how the inter-connectedness works (eg Greenfield likens the localised inter-connectedness found on scans to the ripple effect when you throw a stone in a pond - summarised here <https://www.scaruffi.com/mind/greenfie.html>).

What we know is a sense of being a discrete, unified self somehow emerges. For such complex


critters as humans, the evolutionary pressure to turn a confusing cacophany of sights, sounds, sensations, memories, etc, into a useful experiential model which helps us to navigate the world, makes sense of the need for such a mechanism. We'd expect to eventually uncover some such 'unifying' mechanism in the brain. And perhaps that's where it's working a little differently for people with autism.

Such a mechanism might also amount to some sort of intermediary process, or even a bridging mechanism between the mental and physical, but if that's an experiencing mini-me, it only puts the bridging problem back a stage.

More later

CHAPTER 2.236.

~

Terrapin Station on  Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 9:20 PM



2.232. by GE Morton

2.231. by Terrapin Station

"Physical" doesn't imply "tangible."

Yes, it does, in the everyday sense:

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physical>

Even with 2a, that doesn't imply tangible. Look up "tangible." Seriously, why do I need to explain this to you?

But no philosophical, scientific etc. usage of "physical" implies that something is perceivable to unaided human senses. You're on a philosophy board.

"Everywhere" doesn't imply "nowhere."

Yes, it does. Citing the spacetime coordinates of a thing is meaningful only if it enables us to locate the thing in a specific place. Something alleged to exist at all spacetime coordinates is indistinguishable from one which exists at no spacetime coordinates. "Omnipresence" is a vacuous concept.

[/quote]

If x exists everywhere then x exists at location L. If x exists nowhere then x doesn't exist at location L.

There's something seriously wrong with you.

CHAPTER 2.237.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 9:43 PM



2.232. by GE Morton

Yes, it does, in the everyday sense:

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physical>

Tangible means touchable.

Surely you can think of physical things that cannot be touched.

CHAPTER 2.238.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 9:48 PM



2.237. by Sculptor1

2.232. by GE Morton

Yes, it does, in the everyday sense:

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physical>

Tangible means touchable.

Surely you can think of physical things that cannot be touched.

I like how, among other things, he listed the definition of "physical" (and from a generic dictionary, no less), as if the problem was solely that. :lol:

CHAPTER 2.239.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 12:05 AM

2.229. by Atla

So then, again, we run into the mental-physical identity issue which you seem to have rejected. Of course I'm saying that identity is the only sensible way forward, reductionism solves nothing.

If we understand "identity" in Leibniz's sense --- two things are identical IFF they differ in no distinguishable properties, then phenomenal experience and brain processes are obviously not identical. The Place/Smart identity thesis confuses the "is" of composition (lightning is a stream of electrons) with the "is" of identity (the Morning Star is the Evening Star).

Evidence for what? We can't measure qualia so there's no evidence for it.

Well, if you understand "qualia" as I defined it earlier, and you claim "there is no evidence for it," then you apparently cannot distinguish red from green, or even from the smell of ammonia. If you can make those distinctions, without any external apparatus, then you DO have evidence for qualia. We don't, BTW, have to "measure" qualia to have evidence for them. For qualia, "to be is to be perceived."

I can, of course, have no direct evidence that you have qualia. I can only infer that you do from your observable ability to make the above distinctions.

However, the 'laws' or 'features' of nature tend to be universal, so why would there be an exception here? So the default idea is that qualia is universal, all these 'emergence out of complexity' etc. ideas are probably just bad philosophy.

Qualia are not "laws of nature." Or features of it. They are features, products, only of certain types of physical systems, some natural, but perhaps some artificial also.

CHAPTER 2.240.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 12:13 AM

2.237. by Sculptor1

Tangible means touchable.

"Definition of tangible (Entry 1 of 2)

1a: capable of being perceived especially by the sense of touch : PALPABLE"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tangible>

In the broader sense, especially among philosophers, "tangible" means perceivable via the senses.

CHAPTER 2.241.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 12:34 AM

2.236. by Terrapin Station

But no philosophical, scientific etc. usage of "physical" implies that something is perceivable to unaided human senses. You're on a philosophy board.

In the post which started this latest pointless quibble I said, "Fields are 'physical' because they are posited by physical theory. They are not "physical" in the everyday sense, which implies being tangible and having definite spacetime coordinates."

Now you're repeating what I acknowledged in the first sentence of the above quote. In the *everyday sense*, physical means tangible --- detectable by the senses --- and locatable in time and space.

If x exists everywhere then x exists at location L. If x exists nowhere then x doesn't exist at location L.

Yep. And "existing at location L" and "not existing at location L" are indistinguishable. Both statements are non-cognitive.

CHAPTER 2.242.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 12:49 AM

GE

Gertie wrote: ↑
Yesterday, 3:13 pm

If the model is a product of the brain, a separate thing like steam from a train, how is the brain 'aware' of its contents? Or how does the model 'present itself' to the brain? The model/product is what's made of the seeing and thinking experiencing stuff, right? So the physical brain isn't 'looking' at the experiential product like a little homunculus in a Cartesian theatre – Dennett rightly dismisses that. So how does the communication from the experiential model back to the model maker brain work, in order to take the appropriate physical action?

The model does not present itself to the brain; the brain creates the model, which embraces the brain itself (imperfectly). It is not part of the brain, strictly speaking, any more than electrical field is part of the generator that produces it. But it is not entirely separate from the brain either. There is a continuous feedback circuit between the model and the (non-conscious) portions of the brain. Those portions deliver information to the model in real time, it is processed there, possible responses analyzed and evaluated, and the results delivered back to the appropriate portions of the brain, to undertake a task, control movement of the body, respond to a threat, etc. At times non-conscious portions of the brain can override the model, and force an action not consciously chosen (such as when it forces you to sleep).

OK thanks, I misunderstood the implications of something you said earlier.

Note that the existence of a dynamic, conceptual or "virtual" model of a system generated by that system nicely explains, unpacks, the concept of "self-awareness." So we can say, tentatively, that any system capable of doing that is conscious.

In a way. But you can draw a picture of yourself or your brain in your own think bubble which can do that. Computer games model a world which my avatar acts within as I watch and make decisions on what action to take. There doesn't seem to be something intrinsically special re consciousness about models which include the model maker.

The point re multiple realizability stands tho – if you don't have an explanation which covers basics like necessary and sufficient conditions, how do you know you're not missing something necessary which is a feature of biological brains, their chemistry and so on. Simply including the model maker in the model, and copying functional processes and dynamic complex patterns of interactions might not be enough.

How and when do we know what is enough? If the AI can pass the Turing test, do we need anything more?

You have to keep in mind that those questions you would ask of the "experience machine" apply just as well to humans. I can only know that you are a conscious creature, a "thinking machine," via your behavior. I have no more access to your "inner world" than I would of that machine. That is just the nature of the beast --- the subjective experience of a conscious system, biological or electronic, will be intrinsically, impenetrably private. We can only impute inner phenomena to it by inferences from its behavior.

Think about that. A dead person, or a brain-dead person, is also made of the same stuff, but they are not conscious.

I'm not getting the brain dead person point? I accept neural correlation, and the dynamic nature of it brains and experience. Seeing other people's brains stop working, usually because they're dead, is why I assume the same will happen to me and I'll no longer experience anything when I die. How is that relevant to whether AIs will be able to experience?

I think we'd have to conclude that if a system can pass the Turing test and exhibit behaviors characteristic of known conscious creatures (us), even if through some sort of mechanical apparatus, then they, too, are conscious, and that the physical substrate of the system is irrelevant to that capacity.

I think we'd have to conclude we've created something which behaves like us and can pass the Turing test, because the way it works mimics how human brains work. But we wouldn't know if it had captured possible substrate dependent necessary conditions for experiencing.

[I'm happy to put Dennett aside now. Thanks for your help on that, I'd had this nagging feeling I must be missing something significant].

CHAPTER 2.243.

~

evolution on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 1:10 AM

2.224. by Terrapin Station

2.222. by evolution

No.

What is your philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge?

I do NOT have one, as I do NOT do, so called, "philosophical analysis's".

I just LOOK AT 'what IS', and present 'that'.

By the way, What is your, so called, "philosophical analysis" of 'propositional knowledge'?

CHAPTER 2.244.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 3:46 AM

2.242. by Gertie

In a way. But you can draw a picture of yourself or your brain in your own think bubble which can do that. Computer games model a world which my avatar acts within as I watch and make decisions on what action to take. There doesn't seem to be something intrinsically special re consciousness about models which include the model maker.

That avatar is not a model of you. It is only a token for you. It is not mirroring your behavior, or responding to its virtual environment, in real time.

I'm not getting the brain dead person point? I accept neural correlation, and the dynamic nature of it brains and experience. Seeing other people's brains stop working, usually because they're dead, is why I assume the same will happen to me and I'll no longer experience anything when I die. How is that relevant to whether AIs will be able to experience?

Because, though the brain-dead person is made of the same stuff as a brain-alive one, it is not *behaving* like one. The behavior, not the structure/composition, of the system is the criterion we apply to decide whether a system (other than ourselves) is conscious. If we decide, based on behavior, that it is conscious we induct, by induction from our own experience, phenomenal states to it.

I think we'd have to conclude we've created something which behaves like us and can pass the Turing test, because the way it works mimics how human brains work. But we wouldn't know if it had captured possible substrate dependent necessary conditions for experiencing.

How will we ever know that, other than by observing its behavior?

A number of S-F stories have explored this issue --- typically, portraying a future "robot rebellion" wherein robots are demanding their "rights." Of course, the rebellious robots are portrayed very human-like, behaviorally speaking. They cooperate with and care for one another (and sometimes humans as well), express joy and sadness, elation and depression, grieve when losing a loved one, often come up with original ideas and clever solutions to problems that have eluded humans, produce art, literature, and music, some of which is outstanding, and even philosophize. The opponents of the "robot rights" movement insist that despite all this, the machines are not human and thus have no rights. "We built them, they are our property, and we may do with them as we wish!"

The classic film *Blade Runner* also explores these issues, though it deals with androids, which are biological but artificial.

How would you come down on the "robot rights" issue? :-)

CHAPTER 2.245.

~

Atla on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 5:32 AM

2.239. by GE Morton

2.229. by Atla

So then, again, we run into the mental-physical identity issue which you seem to have rejected. Of course I'm saying that identity is the only sensible way forward, reductionism solves nothing.

If we understand "identity" in Leibniz's sense --- two things are identical IFF they differ in no distinguishable properties, then phenomenal experience and brain processes are obviously not identical. The Place/Smart identity thesis confuses the "is" of composition (lightning is a stream of electrons) with the "is" of identity (the Morning Star is the Evening Star).

Evidence for what? We can't measure qualia so there's no evidence for it.

Well, if you understand "qualia" as I defined it earlier, and you claim "there is no evidence for it," then you apparently cannot distinguish red from green, or even from the smell of ammonia. If you can make those distinctions, without any external apparatus, then you DO have evidence for qualia. We don't, BTW, have to "measure" qualia to have evidence for them. For qualia, "to be is to be perceived."

I can, of course, have no direct evidence that you have qualia. I can only infer that you do from your observable ability to make the above distinctions.

However, the 'laws' or 'features' of nature tend to be universal, so why would there be an exception here? So the default idea is that qualia is universal, all these 'emergence out of complexity' etc. ideas are probably just bad philosophy.

Qualia are not "laws of nature." Or features of it. They are features, products, only of certain types of physical systems, some natural, but perhaps some artificial also.

Total lack of critical thinking.

CHAPTER 2.246.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 9:44 AM

2.238. by Terrapin Station



2.237. by Sculptor1

Tangible means touchable.

Surely you can think of physical things that cannot be touched.

I like how, among other things, he listed the definition of "physical" (and from a generic dictionary, no less), as if the problem was solely that. :lol:

I love to see him disclaim the sun as non physical. Or a proton for that matter!

CHAPTER 2.247.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 9:46 AM



2.240. by GE Morton

2.237. by Sculptor1

Tangible means touchable.

"Definition of tangible (Entry 1 of 2)

1a: capable of being perceived especially by the sense of touch : PALPABLE"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tangible>

In the broader sense, especially among philosophers, "tangible" means perceivable via the senses.

Even by abusing language you have failed to advance your claim, neither have you answered my questions.

CHAPTER 2.248.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 10:40 AM



2.243. by evolution

2.224. by Terrapin Station

What is your philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge?

I do NOT have one, as I do NOT do, so called, "philosophical analysis's".


I just LOOK AT 'what IS', and present 'that'.

Aka philosophical analyses when this is done in a philosophical context, lol.

So, in other words, what is your "'what is' presentation" for propositional knowledge in this philosophical context?

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 4 9 .

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 11:11 AM



2.239. by GE Morton

If we understand "identity" in Leibniz's sense --- two things are identical IFF they differ in no distinguishable properties, then phenomenal experience and brain processes are obviously not identical. The Place/Smart identity thesis confuses the "is" of composition (lightning is a stream of electrons) with the "is" of identity (the Morning Star is the Evening Star).

I explained this to you already. Brain/mind identity is just the same as morning star/evening star identity. The apparent differences are due to spatiotemporal reference point differences.

With the morning star and evening star, it's due to observing it in the morning versus in the evening, and in different cardinal directions in the sky. So there are temporal, spatial and contextual differences a la different spatiotemporal reference points.

With brain/mind, it's due to observing it from a spatiotemporal reference point of "otherness" -- that is, observing it from a third-person point of view, versus observing it from the spatiotemporal reference point of *being it* -- that is, observing it from a first-person point of view.

The differences are differences of perspective or spatiotemporal reference point.

Brains are never going to seem just like minds from a third-person perspective, and minds are never going to seem just like brains from a first-person perspective, because the *perspectives* are never going to seem identical.

That's just like the morning star is never going to seem like the evening star from a "seeing it in the morning, looking to the east" perspective, and the evening star is never going to seem like the

morning star from a "seeing it in the evening, looking to the west" perspective, because those *perspectives* are never going to seem identical.

With the morning star/evening star, we can realize that we're seeing Venus, and from a third person perspective (which of course is all we can have of Venus--we can't literally BE Venus) Venus seems like Venus, but brains/minds are unique in that they're the only thing possible for which the different perspectives in question are observing it third-person versus *being it*, and those two perspectives aren't reconcilable in the same way because of this. Hence why brain/mind identity is a unique case for this issue.

CHAPTER 2.250.

~

evolution on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 11:18 AM

2.248. by Terrapin Station

2.243. by evolution

I do NOT have one, as I do NOT do, so called, "philosophical analysis's".

I just LOOK AT 'what IS', and present 'that'.

Aka philosophical analyses when this is done in a philosophical context, lol.

I have ALREADY TOLD 'you'; you can label or define absolutely ANY thing, absolutely ANY way you like. So, if you want to define or label 'presenting and/or illustrating a picture of what was seen' as 'a philosophical context', then so be it. But NOT EVERY one LOOKS AT and SEES things the way you do.

2.248. by Terrapin Station

So, in other words, what is your "'what is' presentation" for propositional knowledge in this philosophical context?

In, what is 'this', so called, "philosophical context"?

Also, and by the way, I asked you: What is your, so called, "philosophical analysis" of 'propositional knowledge'? But you have NOT YET answer this question.

CHAPTER 2.251.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 11:29 AM



In, what is 'this', so called, "philosophical context"?

If you don't know what a philosophical context is, why are you posting on a philosophy board?

CHAPTER 2.252.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 12:20 PM

GE

In a way. But you can draw a picture of yourself or your brain in your own think bubble which can do that. Computer games model a world which my avatar acts within as I watch and make decisions on what action to take. There doesn't seem to be something intrinsically special re consciousness about models which include the model maker.

That avatar is not a model of you. It is only a token for you. It is not mirroring your behavior, or responding to its virtual environment, in real time.

True, I'm just making the point that there's nothing intrinsically special about a model which includes the model maker, which might lead to experiential states manifesting. Do you think there is?

I'm not getting the brain dead person point? I accept neural correlation, and the dynamic nature of it brains and experience. Seeing other people's brains stop working, usually because they're dead, is why I assume the same will happen to me and I'll no longer experience anything when I die.

How is ...

Because, though the brain-dead person is made of the same stuff as a brain-alive one, it is not behaving like one. The behavior, not the structure/composition, of the system is the criterion we apply to decide whether a system (other than ourselves) is conscious. If we decide, based on behavior, that it is conscious we inpute, by induction from our own experience, phenomenal states to it.

To clarify I don't dismiss behaviour, that is a major observable clue, it would be daft to ignore it. You made the point that we have to assume other people have mental experience too, and I'm saying we have an extra clue re other people - they are made of the same stuff and biological/chemical processes. That could be very significant, we don't know.

Computers are already bordering on beating the Turing test. And self reports in answer to 'what is it like' questions could be misinterpreted by a machine which doesn't have mental experience and so no reference for what the question means. Or machine experience might be significantly different and asking what is it like to see a red rose makes no sense, where-as being hungry for electricity, or more stimuli, or something much weirder might, but we wouldn't think to ask. It will be exciting, but unlikely to be conclusive.

Where-as if we had an actual explanation which included the necessary and sufficient conditions, then we could test for those. We could make a consciousness-o-meter and not have to guess.

*I think we'd have to conclude we've created something which behaves like us and can pass the Turing test, because the way it works mimics how human brains work. But we wouldn't know if it had captured possible substrate dependent necessary conditions for experiencing.
How will we ever know that, other than by observing its behavior?*

It's OK to say we don't know.

*A number of S-F stories have explored this issue --- typically, portraying a future "robot rebellion" wherein robots are demanding their "rights." Of course, the rebellious robots are portrayed very human-like, behaviorally speaking. They cooperate with and care for one another (and sometimes humans as well), express joy and sadness, elation and depression, grieve when losing a loved one, often come up with original ideas and clever solutions to problems that have eluded humans, produce art, literature, and music, some of which is outstanding, and even philosophize. The opponents of the "robot rights" movement insist that despite all this, the machines are not human and thus have no rights. "We built them, they are our property, and we may do with them as we wish!"
The classic film Blade Runner also explores these issues, though it deals with androids, which are biological but artificial.*

If you like that sort of thing there was a good UK TV series called Humans which was quite a realistic portrayal of how robots could integrate into everyday life.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4122068/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0. They rebel of course, but what self-respecting robot doesn't.

How would you come down on the "robot rights" issue?

Heh. The Un-Natural Rights issue ;)

I just want a robot servant, is that too much to ask! But we should err on the side of caution, if there's enough evidence to think they have experiential states, they should in principle have commensurate moral consideration, probably including rights. (Just keep the off switch handy).

(If you want to while away some quarantine, Dennett has an entertaining brain twister short story which covers some similar ground <https://www.lehigh.edu/%7Emhb0/Dennett-WhereAmI.pdf>)

CHAPTER 2.253.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 2:55 PM

2.245. by Atla

Total lack of critical thinking.

Ah. Lacking any substantive arguments, a retreat to *ad hominem*s.

CHAPTER 2.254.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 3:00 PM

2.247. by Sculptor1

Even by abusing language you have failed to advance your claim, neither have you answered my questions.

To which claim to you refer? And I scrolled back several pages, found no questions from you. Perhaps I didn't go back far enough. Could you ask them again?

CHAPTER 2.255.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 3:25 PM

2.253. by GE Morton

2.245. by Atla

Total lack of critical thinking.

Ah. Lacking any substantive arguments, a retreat to ad hominems.

Yeah first try to get a handle on what fields are, what 'physical' means, what evidence means in science, what location is, why "identity" in Leibniz's sense doesn't apply here, what a theoretical construct is and what it isn't. Then maybe you'll understand that

The are features, products, only of certain types of physical systems, some natural, but perhaps some artificial also.

is your random fantasy with nothing to back it up. And then reconsider who's lacking substantive arguments.

CHAPTER 2.256.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 4:22 PM

2.249. by Terrapin Station

2.239. by GE Morton

If we understand "identity" in Leibniz's sense --- two things are identical IFF they differ in no distinguishable properties, then phenomenal experience and brain processes are obviously not identical. The Place/Smart identity thesis confuses the "is" of composition (lightning is a stream of electrons) with the "is" of identity (the Morning Star is the Evening Star).

I explained this to you already. Brain/mind identity is just the same as morning star/evening star identity. The apparent differences are due to spatiotemporal reference point differences.

A laughable "explanation" already refuted, which explains nothing. Apparently that refutation went over your head. Let me try to make it simpler.

With the morning star and evening star, it's due to observing it in the morning versus in the evening, and in different cardinal directions in the sky. So there are temporal, spatial and contextual differences a la different spatiotemporal reference points.

All of those differences are differences in observational circumstances --- the times and places observations are made --- and NOT in the properties of the planet. To claim two things are identical you need to cite a lack of differences in the properties of those objects, NOT in the circumstances of observation. The observable, measurable properties of the planet Venus --- its mass, diameter, atmospheric composition, orbital velocity and parameters, axial tilt, rotational velocity, etc., are given in any astronomy text. If the two objects in question are identical in those and all other detectable respects then they are identical; the times/places of observation are irrelevant. There are no footnotes in those texts declaring, "The above properties apply to Venus only when observed from spatio-temporal coordinates x, y, x."

The observable "properties" of qualia bear no resemblance, in any respect, to the observable properties of neural processes. ("Properties" in the first case is in scare quotes because, strictly speaking, qualia have no properties --- that term implies some substance to which the property is attached. But qualia have no substance --- they only have a "distinguishable character"). Neural processes have many properties in the ordinary sense; qualia have none of those. No change in observational viewpoint changes ANY of the properties of the planet Venus, nor of the properties of a particular neural process. Nor do they lose any of those properties when viewed from different vantage points.

Moreover, as previously pointed out, the perspective appearance of a 3D object from a given reference point can be translated to one from any other reference point via a simple algorithm. No such translation is possible for your first-person, third-person perspectives. That perspectival difference is NOT a difference in spatio-temporal reference points. A quale is not even a 3D object; it is "one-dimensional;" it appears the same way from every reference point from which it can be viewed --- which is only one. No other observer can observe it from any reference point accessible to him. To claim that something you cannot even view is "identical," in Leibniz's sense, to something you can is groundless, oblivious to the obvious, and frivolous.

Let's try a thought experiment. You are facing two computer screens, Screen 1 presenting a large red square, Screen 2 showing a EKG-like graph showing the activity of all the neurons thought to be involved when you are viewing Screen 1. While viewing Screen 1 you can push a button to freeze

the Screen 2 display at that point. Are the two displays identical in Leibniz's sense? Would any other conceivable method of displaying or representing brain activity be identical to the Screen 1 display? Do they have any similarities at all, other than both appearing on computer monitors?

You're just out-to-lunch, here, TP.

CHAPTER 2.257.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 4:27 PM

2.255. by Atla

Yeah first try to get a handle on what fields are, what 'physical' means, what evidence means in science, what location is, why "identity" in Leibniz's sense doesn't apply here, what a theoretical construct is and what it isn't. Then maybe you'll understand that

Well, given this dialogue so far, I'm pretty sure I have a far better grasp on all of those terms than you do. But I'm always open to instruction --- you're more than welcome to present your understandings of them. Perhaps you can begin with explaining why Leibniz's definition of identity is inapplicable, and just what definition you prefer.

CHAPTER 2.258.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 4:57 PM

2.257. by GE Morton

Well, given this dialogue so far, I'm pretty sure I have a far better grasp on all of those terms than you do. But I'm always open to instruction --- you're more than welcome to present your understandings of them.


What makes you pretty sure? You couldn't even sort out what "physical" means, or what a "field" is.

Perhaps you can begin with explaining why Leibniz's definition of identity is inapplicable, and just what definition you prefer.

You need two things, if you want to compare two things. Qualia has no known measurable physical properties, so it can't be compared to something that does. So their identity can't be decided or refuted this way. Which is, like, the very issue.

CHAPTER 2.259.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 5:12 PM



2.256. by GE Morton

All of those differences are differences in observational circumstances

Likewise with brain vs mind, as I explained.

CHAPTER 2.260.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 5:21 PM



For some reason, by the way, GE, you appear to be unable to grasp the difference of "observational circumstances" of first person/*being* x and third person/*viewing* x as something *other* than being x. Because you're repeating objections that completely ignore this distinction, such as your thought experiment and your comments about Venus, where I already clarified that we can only have third person observational circumstances with respect to . . . This is why the brain/mind perspectives are unique, because it's the only thing where we can have a first person/*being* x perspective -- you keep simply ignoring this.

CHAPTER 2.261.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 5:27 PM

2.258. by Atla

What makes you pretty sure? You couldn't even sort out what "physical" means, or what a "field" is.

Well, I gave two definitions of "physical," a philosophical one ("whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics") and everyday, common-sense one ("anything detectable by the senses and having a specific spatio-temporal location"). With which do you quarrel? I gave no definition of "field;" I only said they are "ethereal."

Perhaps you can begin with explaining why Leibniz's definition of identity is inapplicable, and just what definition you prefer.

You need two things, if you want to compare two things. Qualia has no known measurable physical properties, so it can't be compared to something that does. So their identity can't be decided or refuted this way. Which is, like, the very issue.

Leibniz's definition is not restricted to "measurable physical properties." It embraces *all discernible properties*. If two (alleged) things are distinguishable in any way, other than numerically, then they are not identical.

Another common criterion is the "is" of composition ("lightning is a stream of electrons"). But you can't claim qualia are identical to brain states per that criterion either, because that would require that qualia be *reducible* to brain states, which virtually everyone agrees they cannot be.

If you have some other criterion for deciding whether two (alleged) things are identical, you need to set it forth.

CHAPTER 2.262.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 5:50 PM

2.261. by GE Morton

Well, I gave two definitions of "physical," a philosophical one ("whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics") and everyday, common-sense one ("anything detectable by the senses and having a specific spatio-temporal location"). With which do you quarrel? I gave no definition of "field;" I only said they are "ethereal."

So this 'everyday' usage of physical is irrelevant to the argument then (I may have heard the word used like this long ago, but not sure). It's just a way of speaking.

In actual physics, fields may just as well be detectable by the senses. The senses may be part of those very fields. And field have values at every specific spatio-temporal location.

So again, saying that they are 'ethereal' means nothing, we run into the identity issue anyway.

Leibniz's definition is not restricted to "measurable physical properties." It embraces all discernible properties. If two (alleged) things are distinguishable in any way, other than numerically, then they are not identical.

Again: maybe you can discern a red qualia from a green qualia. And you can discern physical properties X from physical properties Y. But there's no know way to connect or compare the two groups. So you can't say that they are not identical. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't. Again: that's the very issue.

CHAPTER 2.263.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 6:21 PM



2.261. by GE Morton

Well, I gave two definitions of "physical," a philosophical one ("whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics")

That's not the philosophical sense of "physical."

CHAPTER 2.264.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 10:29 PM

2.262. by Atla

Again: maybe you can discern a red qualia from a green qualia. And you can discern physical properties X from physical properties Y. But there's no know way to connect or compare the two groups. So you can't say that they are not identical. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't. Again: that's the very issue.

Of course I can compare them. I can perceive the qualia directly, and brain activity via instruments; a microscope, or EKG record. I can even compare them in real time. And when doing so easily distinguish between them. Hence they are not identical in Leibniz's sense. Nor are they identical in the composition sense, since I can't derive from any observations of brain activity what distinctive olfactory sensation I will experience when exposed to, say, some unfamiliar chemical. I will only know that once I get a sniff.

CHAPTER 2.265.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 10:32 PM

2.263. by Terrapin Station

2.261. by GE Morton

Well, I gave two definitions of "physical," a philosophical one ("whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics")


That's not the philosophical sense of "physical."

THE philosophical sense? There is only one?

No doubt it is not your philosophical sense. Your understandings of many common terms, in philosophy and elsewhere, are pretty bizarre.

CHAPTER 2.266.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 10:54 PM



2.265. by GE Morton

2.263. by Terrapin Station

That's not the philosophical sense of "physical."

THE philosophical sense? There is only one?

No doubt it is not your philosophical sense. Your understandings of many common terms, in philosophy and elsewhere, are pretty bizarre.

There's no philosophical sense of physical that amounts to a mapping to the current state of physics as a scientific discipline.

CHAPTER 2.267.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 10:58 PM



2.264. by GE Morton

Of course I can compare them. I can perceive the qualia directly, and brain activity via instruments; a microscope, or EKG record. I can even compare them in real time. And when doing so easily distinguish between them. Hence they are not identical in Leibniz's sense.

Again, the distinction there is just like the morning star/evening star distinction. It's a distinction that stems from different perspectives. There's no actual difference in what we're referring to from those different perspectives. It's just two different ways to talk about it, two different sets of apparent properties, due to those two different perspectives. The "radical" difference is that one perspective is first person/being the item in question and the other is third person. For every other thing in the world, we can only have multiple third person perspectives.

CHAPTER 2.268.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 11:01 PM

2.260. by Terrapin Station

For some reason, by the way, GE, you appear to be unable to grasp the difference of "observational circumstances" of first person/being x and third person/viewing x as something other than being x.

I have utterly no idea what you're trying to say there. Do you?

(That sounds like something HAN would say).

CHAPTER 2.269.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 11:19 PM



2.268. by GE Morton

2.260. by Terrapin Station

For some reason, by the way, GE, you appear to be unable to grasp the difference of "observational circumstances" of first person/being x and third person/viewing x as something other than being x.

I have utterly no idea what you're trying to say there. Do you?

(That sounds like something HAN would say).

Yeah, it's pretty obvious at this point that you have no idea what I'm saying, yet, despite the fact that it's the crux of my view, and I've only said it about 20 or so different ways in this conversation (and tens of times elsewhere on this board), you just ignore it and/or attempt to argue against it rather than asking for clarification/asking for an explanation.

Let's just stick to observational circumstances since you understand that idea.

There's a difference between observing something third-person and observing something first-person, where the latter is the observational circumstance where you're *identical* to the thing in question.

There's only one thing that exists where we can be in a first-person observational circumstance with respect to it: the subset of our brain functions that amount to mentality. That's the only thing for which we can have the perspective of BEING the thing in question.

For every other thing in the world (including other persons' brains, as well as our own where we're seeing it, say, via medical imaging), we can only be situated observationally so that we're removed from it, we're observing it from a third-person perspective, from a perspective from which it's "an other," it's not identical to us.

These two perspectives (first-person versus third-person) make a difference, because the same thing *seems* to be different from a first-person versus a third-person perspective.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 12:27 AM

2.252. by Gertie

True, I'm just making the point that there's nothing intrinsically special about a model which includes the model maker, which might lead to experiential states manifesting. Do you think there is?

I'm not sure what would count as "intrinsically special," or why a system must have some intrinsically special (however understood) property to manifest consciousness. I'm inclined to think of consciousness as a natural phenomenon that occurs predictably in complex dynamic systems of a certain type, analogously to the way a magnetic field appears around a wire carrying an electric current. It appears, or can, at a certain point when evolutionary pressures forge ever more complex organisms having ever more sophisticated tools for assuring their survival and propagation. Consciousness is a survival strategy (though how successful it will be in the long run remains to be seen).

To clarify I don't dismiss behaviour, that is a major observable clue, it would be daft to ignore it. You made the point that we have to assume other people have mental experience too, and I'm saying we have an extra clue re other people - they are made of the same stuff and biological/chemical processes. That could be very significant, we don't know.

Yes, it is a clue, but it may be coincidental and thus superficial. The only evidence we will ever have for its importance, or lack of it, is behavior. Many of the technologies we've devised were first observed as natural phenomena --- fire, electricity, flight, many others. We've learned to extract the physical principles involved in those phenomena and apply them artificially. E.g., we learned that heavier-than-air objects may fly from birds, but (at least after Icarus) did not assume feathers and muscles are necessary to enable it.

Where-as if we had an actual explanation which included the necessary and sufficient conditions, then we could test for those. We could make a consciousness-o-meter and not have to guess.

Well, that's the problem --- there can be no such meter, because phenomenal experience is inherently, impenetrably private. Behavior is the only evidence we will ever have, and if the behavior of an AI system is indistinguishable from that of a human, then it would only be stubbornness that deters us from attributing consciousness to it.

It's OK to say we don't know.

Are we willing to say that about other people?

If you like that sort of thing there was a good UK TV series called Humans which was quite a realistic portrayal of how robots could integrate into everyday life. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4122068/?ref_=nv_sr_srsq_o. They rebel of course, but what self-respecting robot doesn't.

Amazon has it. I'll check it out!

I just want a robot servant, is that too much to ask! But we should err on the side of caution, if there's enough evidence to think they have experiential states, they should in principle have commensurate moral consideration, probably including rights. (Just keep the off switch handy).

Should we install such switches on humans too, at birth?

CHAPTER 2.271.

~

Wosname on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 10:23 AM

2.268. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 12:01 am

Terrapin Station wrote: ↑Yesterday, 6:21 pm

For some reason, by the way, GE, you appear to be unable to grasp the difference of "observational circumstances" of first person/being x and third person/viewing x as something other than being x. I have utterly no idea what you're trying to say there. Do you?

I think this is a damned difficult topic. GEM I'm not sure you are wrong but I have some doubts all the same. I lean towards a particular version of identity theory, (embodied identity theory), so I think I broadly agree with TS, but I've not yet completely fallen over. I am not sure whether detailed description of the necessary and sufficient conditions for consciousness is needed to resolve matters as you suggest. (Given my limited understanding of biology you may guess I am hoping not). And I note that private experience is increasingly open to objective, scientific scrutiny. Let me share my thinking and see what you think. I suspect we have some areas of agreement and some of disagreement.

Firstly, the effects of some drugs, brain injuries, sleep, dreaming and brain scans etc. suggest that perceptual, cognitive and affective states are linked with brain processes, and experiment suggests a direct link. Change the brain and you can change the experience and vice versa. I think this gives identity theory some plausibility.

A concern is that objective accounts of an experience may fail to capture the subjective nature of the experience. The subjective appears to be something extra that needs explaining. But as has been pointed out, if consciousness is identical to a brain state then brain processes do not generate or produce consciousness, they are consciousness (and vice versa). If X generates Y it is not identical to Y. In your example GEM, if bees or the things that they do generate honey, then bees or the things they do are not honey. But identity is symmetrical and if consciousness is a brain process, it is not an extra property. There is no new thing to look for. (Gertie, your point about a homunculus is well taken).

The claim, then, is that some objective events are identical to some subjective events. The fact that there are different ways of encountering a thing does not necessarily mean we are encountering different things. A thing may be encountered subjectively as lived experience, or objectively as

when observed by another. Note that, in viewing consciousness as a brain process, mentality is not somehow eliminated by the analysis as some have argued. We are not left with just the objective physical description of events. The physical process is also a mental event. A difficulty is that some argument will not allow analysis involving anything other than the comparison of objective physical events even though (as I think you recognise) this may be inadequate to the task in hand. In other words I am concerned that, for some, identity is only permitted to be established by observed similar properties from an objective POV, and this will not allow, by definition almost, a different POV (e.g. one allowing that subjective experience could be identical to objective experience), simply on the grounds that the two perspectives are different. I think that may be question begging and while such out of hand rejection is understandable, it may not be right. I will accept that the proposed identity may not be right, but it still seems possible, and to me likely, that it is right.

The brain may be modelling the external world, but identity theory proposes that this modelling just is the processing being done by the brain, not some extra epiphenomenal thing. An external observer using a scanner to watch your brain working cannot experience what your brain is experiencing, since they can only experience what their own brain is experiencing. But this just is what it means to have different perspectives. So the suggestion is that the issue is effectively one of different perspectives, rather than different substances. Here I find myself agreeing, I believe, with TS. We can engage with a thing perceptually (subjective experience) or consider/observe how we do this (objective description). Of course considering something objectively is itself a subjective experience. A complaint is that they are just too different to be the same thing. But the whole point is that different perspectives just are different. The inside of your house does not look like the outside of your house, but it is your house all the same (assuming you have one).

If this works then there seems nothing missing here. Some say you can't see a thought. But by this view you can, though you can only directly experience your own. This does allow that a clever external observer may be able to decode brain activity, and tell what the thought or subjective experience is likely to be, and researchers are making progress here. I have read that currently, decoding of information gained by brain scans enables researchers to determine what playing card someone is holding with better than 90% accuracy, and it is thought that in the future brain decoding will be capable of extracting information an investigator might want, such as the encryption code to a file or the combination to a safe.

We may still ask how it comes to be that some physical events can be mental ones. It is a fair question. I think a reasonable inference is that this is linked to the nature and complexity of the events in question. It seems not unreasonable to argue that organisms have evolved to have a perspective and this is tied to what they do in living their lives. Subjective experience is an evolved feature that can be explained by the biological history of the organism.

How do we decide on identity? Well, are we justified in saying (in time honoured tradition) that the morning star is the same as the evening star? Even without powerful telescopes, when we examine where and when we encounter these two things it seems we are (something recognised it seems even in ancient Sumeria). And again, we may ask whether these two things, the physical and mental, are the same thing. Again, we answer by looking at how we encounter these things, and the evidence and reasoning outlined above seems to me to justify the view that they probably are. We

may not know or fully understand why or how Venus comes to have the properties it has, and we may not know why and how brains come to have the properties they have, but arguably that is a separate issue to any putative matters of identity.

To play with your thought experiment, it seems possible that if we are looking at a screen showing our brain activity while looking at the screen, it may be an example whereby both the objective and subjective can be objectively seen to coincide. Flash up a red square, a blue triangle, a green circle or whatever and see the changes in brain activity that result. This would seem to support mind-brain identity. Or again, imagine you are in a house looking at a screen showing the outside of the house. You doubt the house on the screen is the same as the one you are sitting in because it looks different from the outside. But you see on the screen someone walk up to the house and start chucking bricks through the windows. At the same time a brick smashes a window on screen, a corresponding window in the house you are sitting in is smashed by a flying brick. You would probably conclude the house you were in was the same as the house on the screen, and you would be unlikely to argue that it couldn't be because you don't know how to build a house.

And I am conscious I have waffled on about a topic I find quite difficult. The waffling reflects the difficulty I am having no doubt. Apologies.

CHAPTER 2.272.

~

Atla on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:15 PM

2.264. by GE Morton

2.262. by Atla

Again: maybe you can discern a red qualia from a green qualia. And you can discern physical properties X from physical properties Y. But there's no know way to connect or compare the two groups. So you can't say that they are not identical. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't. Again: that's the very issue.

Of course I can compare them. I can perceive the qualia directly, and brain activity via instruments; a microscope, or EKG record. I can even compare them in real time. And when doing so easily distinguish between them. Hence they are not identical in Leibniz's sense. Nor are they identical in the composition sense, since I can't derive from any observations of brain activity what distinctive olfactory sensation I will experience when exposed to, say, some unfamiliar chemical. I will only know that once I get a sniff.

Again: you percieve qualia directly, and you also percieve the brain activity via instruments in the form of qualia. So you can't compare qualia to brain activity via instruments either way. Again: that's the very issue.

CHAPTER 2.273.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:39 PM

2.271. by Wosname

We may still ask how it comes to be that some physical events can be mental ones. It is a fair question. I think a reasonable inference is that this is linked to the nature and complexity of the events in question. It seems not unreasonable to argue that organisms have evolved to have a perspective and this is tied to what they do in living their lives. Subjective experience is an evolved feature that can be explained by the biological history of the organism.

But that's when the fun really begins. Yes, identity certainly seems to be the case. But identity also means that not just some, but all physical events must be mental ones (unless proven otherwise).

So that means that while there is indeed a model of the outside world inside the head, subjective experience itself is not a feature of the model, instead it's fundamental, universal.

Western philosophers are simply intellectual cowards, they don't dare to take things to their logical conclusion, instead we have talk of emergence, complexity, evolved features etc. The model in the head is indeed an evolved feature, but subjective experience itself has nothing to do with it.

CHAPTER 2.274.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:42 PM



2.264. by GE Morton

Of course I can compare them. I can perceive the qualia directly, and brain activity via instruments; a microscope, or EKG record. I can even compare them in real time. And when doing so easily distinguish between them. Hence they are not identical in Leibniz's sense. Nor are they identical in the composition sense, since I can't derive from any observations of brain activity what distinctive olfactory sensation I will experience when exposed to, say, some unfamiliar chemical. I will only know that once I get a sniff.

Well not exactly true. You can learn that the specific details of the appearances of certain brains states noted scientifically are consistent with particular types of qualitative experience, and then know what "blue" looks like from another POV such as a scan.

One has to accept that when monochrome Mary finally enters the multicoloured world she learns to nominate the colours.

CHAPTER 2.275.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:59 PM

GE Morton wrote: Well, I gave two definitions of "physical," a philosophical one ("whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics") and everyday, common-sense one ("anything detectable by the senses and having a specific spatio-temporal location"). With which do you quarrel? I gave no definition of "field;" I only said they are "ethereal."

THE philosophical sense? There is only one?

I haven't read through the whole conversation, but I sympathize with your position when talking about the subjects of fields and what it means to be physical. I understand why you would feel that fields are "ethereal" in a way that chairs are not. I can see why you would imply that there is philosophical disagreement as to the meaning of the word "physical" and that therefore simply saying "physical in the philosophical sense" doesn't necessarily clear things up.

I would say that the only genuinely usable definition of "physical" is via empirical observation - tying "the physical" to "that which could be the common cause of various different observation events" or something similar. If we were to leave out observation, and potential observations, altogether, and simply say "that which is physical is that which exists extra-mentally" or some such thing, then when it comes to defining physicalism we hit a circular definition. Physicalism is defined as the belief that physical things are the only things that exist, but it therefore becomes the belief that the only things that exist are things that exist.

I therefore essentially agree with you that "physical" can be defined as "whatever is described or postulated by the science of physics". It follows that the entities we think of as physically existing change as the evidence changes. For example, it used to be thought that there was a physical existent called caloric - a fluid which was thought to be responsible for the conductive flow of heat through matter. It isn't now. Similarly with the luminiferous aether.

CHAPTER 2.276.

~

Wosname on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 5:28 PM

2.273. by Atla

y Atla » Today, 4:39 pm

Yes, identity certainly seems to be the case. But identity also means that not just some, but all physical events must be mental ones (unless proven otherwise).

That is not obvious to me, though I am certain of nothing and do not say you must be wrong. How do you reach this conclusion?

CHAPTER 2.277.

~

Atla on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 5:40 PM

2.276. by Wosname

2.273. by Atla

y Atla » Today, 4:39 pm

Yes, identity certainly seems to be the case. But identity also means that not just some, but all physical events must be mental ones (unless proven otherwise).

That is not obvious to me, though I am certain of nothing and do not say you must be wrong. How do you reach this conclusion?

How do you not reach this conclusion? Why would physical stuff be something more than physical stuff, when arranged in certain ways?

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 7 8 .

~

Wosname on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 5:55 PM

2.277. by Atla

2.276. by Wosname

That is not obvious to me, though I am certain of nothing and do not say you must be wrong. How do you reach this conclusion?

How do you not reach this conclusion? Why would physical stuff be something more than physical stuff, when arranged in certain ways?

I think I am guided by the evidence. We know brains are conscious, even if we don't know why. That they are conscious is not an assumption, in the sense we can correlate the two things, awareness and brain activity and reach a conclusion. But why say a rock is conscious? Is a dead brain conscious? Do you appeal to any evidence here?

C H A P T E R 2 . 2 7 9 .

~

Atla on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:17 PM

2.278. by Wosname

I think I am guided by the evidence. We know brains are conscious, even if we don't know why. That they are conscious is not an assumption, in the sense we can correlate the two things, awareness and brain activity and reach a conclusion. But why say a rock is conscious? Is a dead brain conscious? Do you appeal to any evidence here?

Western philosophers are pseudo-intellectual idiots, so they somehow never realized that this 'consciousness' they always talk about, is a mixture of at least two things that have nothing to do with each other.

Consciousness as in: self-awareness, the human self, psychological phenomena etc. does indeed only happen in highly advanced brains as far as we know. That's why science can correlate these things with brain scans for example. Obviously, rocks don't have this one.

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Now if you mix these two together, you can get something as stupid as 'I think therefore I am', which implies that the constant first-person-POV is somehow dependent on someone's individual brain/mind.

CHAPTER 2.280.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:25 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).



2.279. by Atla

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Or, science hasn't found them because they are the artificial creation of confused Western philosophers and don't actually exist.

2.279. by Atla

Now if you mix these two together, you can get something as stupid as 'I think therefore I am', which implies that the constant first-person-POV is somehow dependent on someone's individual brain/mind.

Can you supply so much as one uncontroversial example of a conscious entity with no nervous system, or am I wildly misreading what you are actually saying here, which seems absurd on the only reading I can struggle to give it?

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:36 PM2.280. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*2.279. by *Atla*

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Or, science hasn't found them because they are the artificial creation of confused Western philosophers and don't actually exist.

It usually makes for more sense to watch out for unfounded assumptions in statements than attack the statement itself.

The unfounded assumption is the idea that science has never found any sign of them which is clearly bunkum. Had it not been for science we'd not even be talking about them.

The term universal is dubious too.

2.279. by *Atla*

Now if you mix these two together, you can get something as stupid as 'I think therefore I am', which implies that the constant first-person-POV is somehow dependent on someone's individual brain/mind.

Can you supply so much as one uncontroversial example of a conscious entity with no nervous system, or am I wildly misreading what you are actually saying here, which seems absurd on the only reading I can struggle to give it?

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:44 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.281. by *Sculptor1*

The unfounded assumption is the idea that science has never found any sign of them which is clearly bunkum. Had it not been for science we'd not even be talking about them.

Oh, so the first mention of qualia occurred in a scientific paper? Which one was it? Who made the discovery and let the rest of the world know these wonderful properties existed, since no one knew before?

CHAPTER 2.283.

~

Atla on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:54 PM

2.280. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.279. by *Atla*

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Or, science hasn't found them because they are the artificial creation of confused Western philosophers and don't actually exist.

2.279. by *Atla*

Now if you mix these two together, you can get something as stupid as 'I think therefore I am', which implies that the constant first-person-POV is somehow dependent on someone's individual brain/mind.

Can you supply so much as one uncontroversial example of a conscious entity with no nervous system, or am I wildly misreading what you are actually saying here, which seems absurd on the only reading I can struggle to give it?

You are reading it exactly the way I explained how not to read it.

As for qualia + the first-person-POV being made-up, in other words: 'this happening isn't happening', some view that as the single most self-refuting view in the history of mankind.

CHAPTER 2.284.

~

Wosname on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 7:13 PM

2.279. by *Atla*

Atla » 53 minutes ago

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Will you explain this to me Atla, i.e. what you mean and why you think it true? I'm stretching a bit here.

CHAPTER 2.285.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Wosname wrote: I think I am guided by the evidence. We know brains are conscious, even if we don't know why. That they are conscious is not an assumption, in the sense we can correlate the two things, awareness and brain activity and reach a conclusion. But why say a rock is conscious? Is a dead brain conscious? Do you appeal to any evidence here?

....

Will you explain this to me Atla, i.e. what you mean and why you think it true? I'm stretching a bit here.

I feel your pain Wosname. I don't know what Atla's on about either.

CHAPTER 2.286.

~

Wosname on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 7:46 PM

2.285. by Steve3007

Steve3007 » 11 minutes ago

I feel your pain Wosname. I don't know what Atla's on about either.

Thanks for that. I was worried it might just be me.

Atla is clearly committed to this view. He has brought it up a number of times. But I feel I have often been struggling to properly understand his reasoning.

Atla - help!

CHAPTER 2.287.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 8:02 PM

Wosname wrote: Atla is clearly committed to this view. He has brought it up a number of times. But I feel I have often been struggling to properly understand his reasoning.

He seems to think that there are two types of consciousness:

Atla wrote: Consciousness as in: self-awareness, the human self, psychological phenomena etc. does indeed only happen in highly advanced brains as far as we know. That's why science can correlate these things with brain scans for example. Obviously, rocks don't have this one.

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

When he says the second type is universal I can only assume that means rocks (among other things) have it. And the fact that science has never found any sign of it is due to it being universal. I presume the idea would be that if something exists universally then there's no way to distinguish its presence from its absence so no way to detect it. Or something like that.

But I suspect that this comment to Faustus5:

You are reading it exactly the way I explained how not to read it.

applies to me here too.

CHAPTER 2.288.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Monday, September 14, 2020 at 9:08 PM

Faustus

2.280. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.279. by Atla

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Or, science hasn't found them because they are the artificial creation of confused Western philosophers and don't actually exist.

2.279. by Atla

Now if you mix these two together, you can get something as stupid as 'I think therefore I am', which implies that the constant first-person-POV is somehow dependent on someone's individual brain/mind.

Can you supply so much as one uncontroversial example of a conscious entity with no nervous system, or am I wildly misreading what you are actually saying here, which seems absurd on the only reading I can struggle to give it?

If you believe your own experience doesn't exist, you're beyond confused.

And panpsychism is a respectable hypothesis. The fact that we don't recognise/assume first person experience, which is unobservable, except in beings which are made like us and exhibit it in the ways we do, doesn't discount its existence.

CHAPTER 2.289.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 9:48 PM



2.282. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.281. by *Sculptor1*

The unfounded assumption is the idea that science has never found any sign of them which is clearly bunkum. Had it not been for science we'd not even be talking about them.

Oh, so the first mention of qualia occurred in a scientific paper? Which one was it? Who made the discovery and let the rest of the world know these wonderful properties existed, since no one knew before?

The whole idea that pain is subjective, and the realisation that colours are not "out there" but only experienced in the head is pure science.


And it was Charles Sanders Peirce a SCIENTIST who first coined the phrase.

So yes it was in a scientific paper.

Check your ignorance before you make an **** of yourself

CHAPTER 2.290.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 11:35 PM



2.271. by *Wosname*

We may still ask how it comes to be that some physical events can be mental ones.

Different materials/relations/processes have different properties.

CHAPTER 2.291.

~

evolution on  Monday, September 14, 2020 at 11:42 PM

2.251. by *Terrapin Station*

2.250. by *evolution*

In, what is 'this', so called, "philosophical context"?

If you don't know what a philosophical context is, why are you posting on a philosophy board?


You still do NOT get it.

I KNOW what a 'philosophical context' is, from my perspective. All I was trying to do was

understand better what your perspective of that phrase is. If you can NOT or will NOT back up, explain, or elaborate on what you say and claim on a philosophy forum, then WHY post in one?

CHAPTER 2.292.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 12:01 AM



2.291. *by evolution*

2.251. *by Terrapin Station*

If you don't know what a philosophical context is, why are you posting on a philosophy board?

You still do NOT get it.

I KNOW what a 'philosophical context' is, from my perspective. All I was trying to do was understand better what your perspective of that phrase is. If you can NOT or will NOT back up, explain, or elaborate on what you say and claim on a philosophy forum, then WHY post in one?

So what is your "'what is' presentation" for propositional knowledge in this philosophical context, per how you think about philosophical contexts?

CHAPTER 2.293.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 5:47 AM

Gertie wrote: And panpsychism is a respectable hypothesis. The fact that we don't recognise/assume first person experience, which is unobservable, except in beings which are made like us and exhibit it in the ways we do, doesn't discount its existence.

This is true of any phenomenon. The fact that phenomenon X is unobservable doesn't discount its existence. But it doesn't give us reason to think it exists either, does it? I don't know about you, but to believe that something exists I need more than "I can't demonstrate with certainty that it doesn't".

What reason do you have to believe that a phenomenon fitting the description "consciousness" exists in all things? Is it simply extrapolation from things that we have good reason to believe are conscious and which we have good reason to believe are made of the same stuff as things that are not noticeably so? In other words, does the argument essentially go: "I am conscious. I am made from atoms. Rocks are made from atoms. Therefore rocks are conscious."?

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:21 AM

Or perhaps it's more of a set theory/classification thing. As in: "I am conscious. I am part of the Earth system. Therefore the Earth system is conscious.". This would be the same reasoning which leads me to simply say "I am conscious" rather than saying "my brain is conscious but my toes are not" or "a particular part of my brain is conscious".

If it's that, then we have the issue that sets and classifications are abstractions. I am part of an indefinitely large number of different sets depending on purpose.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 1:19 PM

2.284. by Wosname

2.279. by Atla

Atla » 53 minutes ago

Consciousness as in: qualia + the constant first-person-POV, is universal. That's why science has never found any sign of them.

Will you explain this to me Atla, i.e. what you mean and why you think it true? I'm stretching a bit here.

I guess one could put it this way: this kind of 'consciousness' is existence itself, and what existence is like.

Things don't *have* existence, things *are* existence. So we can't use science, which is also part of existence, to look for existence.

I've also seen it expressed it like this (among many other ways): this kind of 'consciousness' is first order, and science is happening within this kind of 'consciousness'.


This is the perennial philosophy/nondualism (it comes in many flavours, and it would make interesting debates to try to find the most correct one). But the main underlying idea is the same in all of them.

This is also the default philosophy, it's true unless proven otherwise. Western philosophers aren't aware of this either. That's why people keep asking me to prove it. Prove what? They are the ones making claims based on some fundamental divisions that they made up.

But I've only seen like 2-3 people on philosophy forums who actually understood this philosophy, the other like 98% didn't make it that far. (This is where philosophy actually *begins* in my view, it's one of the three main assumptions we have to make in order to start working on the more difficult questions.)

CHAPTER 2.296.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 1:56 PM



2.295. by Atla

This is also the default philosophy, it's true unless proven otherwise. Western philosophers aren't aware of this either. That's why people keep asking me to prove it. Prove what? They are the ones making claims based on some fundamental divisions that they made up.

People might just be asking you to explain what the f--- you're on about because it sounds like vague gibberish to them.

CHAPTER 2.297.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 2:11 PM

2.296. by Terrapin Station

2.295. by Atla


This is also the default philosophy, it's true unless proven otherwise. Western philosophers aren't aware of this either. That's why people keep asking me to prove it. Prove what? They are the ones making claims based on some fundamental divisions that they made up.

People might just be asking you to explain what the f--- you're on about because it sounds like vague gibberish to them.

Gee you don't say. The majority of people can't grasp this philosophy, even if they try hard. Not even in cultures, where their philosophers have already figured it out. And this fact has shaped the history of mankind.

CHAPTER 2.298.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 2:18 PM

2.297. by Atla



2.296. by Terrapin Station

People might just be asking you to explain what the f--- you're on about because it sounds like vague gibberish to them.

Gee you don't say. The majority of people can't grasp this philosophy, even if they try hard. Not even in cultures, where their philosophers have already figured it out. And this fact has shaped the history of mankind.

Well, and of course it doesn't help when people won't explain it in a clear manner, where they have patience and care about whether people understand them, especially rather than being snarky, condescending, etc.

CHAPTER 2.299.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 2:30 PM

2.298. by Terrapin Station

2.297. by Atla

Gee you don't say. The majority of people can't grasp this philosophy, even if they try hard. Not even in cultures, where their philosophers have already figured it out. And this fact has shaped the history of mankind.

Well, and of course it doesn't help when people won't explain it in a clear manner, where they have patience and care about whether people understand them, especially rather than being snarky, condescending, etc.

Nondualism is infinitely simple in a way, but it does require some rather deep thinking to 'get it', and it can be a longer process. That's why they need gurus in the East. Deep thinking is something you've shown again and again to be the enemy of. Nor are people obliged to fulfill all your requests, as you seem to think.

If you're really interested which I doubt, then put in the energy, you'll find plenty of material on the internet.

CHAPTER 2.300.

~

Gertie on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 4:10 PM

Gertie wrote: And panpsychism is a respectable hypothesis. The fact that we don't recognise/assume first person experience, which is unobservable, except in beings which are made like us and exhibit it in the ways we do, doesn't discount its existence.

This is true of any phenomenon. The fact that phenomenon X is unobservable doesn't discount its existence. But it doesn't give us reason to think it exists either, does it? I don't know about you, but to believe that something exists I need more than "I can't demonstrate with certainty that it doesn't".

What reason do you have to believe that a phenomenon fitting the description "consciousness" exists in all things? Is it simply extrapolation from things that we have good reason to believe are conscious and which we have good reason to believe are made of the same stuff as things that are not noticeably so? In other words, does the argument essentially go: "I am conscious. I am made from atoms. Rocks are made from atoms. Therefore rocks are conscious."?

To me the two most obvious ways of accounting for phenomenal experience is that it's somehow reducible to fundamental material stuff, or it's fundamental itself. The other option I personally think is a strong contender is that our evolved-for-utility ways of observing, thinking about and modelling the world in such ways as these doesn't get to what the actual nature of what we're modelling is like. (The contents of experience might tell us more about us, than about the world beyond us).

The problem for monist substance materialism, as described by physics, is that it appears to have no in principle way of accounting for experience. That's why we can't just assume it will some day account for it. (There's no place for experience in the current physical model of what exists). And the scientific toolkit which helped us come up with a physical way of modeling what exists and how it works, doesn't seem equipped to find a way of modelling experience in those terms. Experience is apparently unobservable and unmeasurable and can't be verified inter-subjectively, because it has radically different types of properties. (Hence talk of The Hard Problem). We might one day be able to explain experience in physical terms, but no-one knows how that could happen, except in the form of broad speculative hypotheses.

That's why some people reasonably posit experience might not ultimately be explainable in physical terms, and might be a different type of substance, rather than a property of material substance. Evidence like neural correlation suggests that if experience is a different fundamental substance, it is closely linked/intwined/integrated with material stuff. (Rather than a fundamental substance capable of floating about independantly as traditional spirit/soul type notions of substance dualism based in religious/Cartesian thinking suggests). There are different types of panpsychism which speculate about how that material-experiential type of relationship works (aka 'mind-body' relationship). Some suggest rocks have mental experience, some suggest they don't.

Potentially the most promising work being done on mental experience is IIT, which is trying to come up with ways of quantifying and predicting experience by looking at how brains work (it's led by two neuroscientists). They say their attempt at a science of experience implies panpsychism is true.

Who knows. (Nobody). But panpsychism is a serious contender.

CHAPTER 2.301.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 4:18 PM

2.267. by Terrapin Station

Again, the distinction there is just like the morning star/evening star distinction. It's a distinction that stems from different perspectives. There's no actual difference in what we're referring to from those different perspectives. It's just two different ways to talk about it, two different sets of apparent properties, due to those two different perspectives.

Oh, I agree. But that is not what you were saying earlier. Earlier you were claiming that the properties of a thing were dependent upon spatio-temporal reference points.

The "radical" difference is that one perspective is first person/being the item in question and the other is third person. For every other thing in the world, we can only have multiple third person perspectives.

Well, first, it makes no sense to speak of perspectives when there is no possibility of more than one. For qualia, there is no possibility of any perspective on it other than that of the person experiencing one. And the object in question is not the observer ("first person/being the item in question"). The object in question is a quale --- something experienced, perceived, by that person.

Are you now identifying qualia with the person experiencing them? Do we need to repeat the definition of "qualia"?

CHAPTER 2.302.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 5:07 PM



2.299. by Atla

2.298. by Terrapin Station

Well, and of course it doesn't help when people won't explain it in a clear manner, where they have patience and care about whether people understand them, especially rather than being snarky, condescending, etc.

Nondualism is infinitely simple in a way, but it does require some rather deep thinking to 'get it', and it can be a longer process. That's why they need gurus in the East. Deep thinking is something you've shown again and again to be the enemy of. Nor are people obliged to fulfill all your requests, as you seem to think.

If you're really interested which I doubt, then put in the energy, you'll find plenty of material on the internet.

"Of course it doesn't help . . ." doesn't imply an obligation.

What sort of material would you say is pertinent? Can you give any sort of reference to it?

CHAPTER 2.303.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 5:15 PM

GE

I think we getting to repeating ourselves/agree to differ time?

*Gertie wrote: ↑
Yesterday, 1:20 pm*

True, I'm just making the point that there's nothing intrinsically special about a model which includes the model maker, which might lead to experiential states manifesting. Do you think there is?

I'm not sure what would count as "intrinsically special," or why a system must have some intrinsically special (however understood) property to manifest consciousness.

Right. So the fact that we humans create a model of the world which includes a model of our self within it, has no apparent bearing on how experience arises. Far less complex experiencing animals probably don't create such a model. It doesn't look like a necessary condition for mental experience. And if it's not, copying the creation of that 'model maker within the model' function won't make any difference to whether an AI can experience.

I'm inclined to think of consciousness as a natural phenomenon that occurs predictably in complex dynamic systems of a certain type, analogously to the way a magnetic field appears around a wire carrying an electric current. It appears, or can, at a certain point when evolutionary pressures forge ever more complex organisms having ever more sophisticated tools for assuring their survival and propagation. Consciousness is a survival strategy (though how successful it will be in the long run remains to be seen).

Yeah could be. It leaves you with the problem of not knowing if AI is the right type of wire.

To clarify I don't dismiss behaviour, that is a major observable clue, it would be daft to ignore it. You made the point that we have to assume other people have mental experience too, and I'm saying we have an extra clue re other people - they are made of the same stuff and biological/chemical processes. That could be very significant, we don't know.

Yes, it is a clue, but it may be coincidental and thus superficial.

Maybe. But to assume the observable behaviour resulting from biological stuff and processes is less likely to be coincidental/superficial than the biological stuff and processes itself would be ****- backwards imo.

The only evidence we will ever have for its importance, or lack of it, is behavior.

Pragmatically perhaps, but that doesn't make it reliable.

Look at this way - why do we assume other humans have experiences like us?

- They are physically almost identical, and brain scans show similar responses to similar stimuli, which match similar verbal reports to ours.

- Their observable behaviour is experientially understandable to us, in that we can imagine behaving similarly in similar circumstances.

It's all about similarity. That's why the hope is that if we create an AI sufficiently similar to a human, it will *somehow* capture the necessary and sufficient conditions for experience.

But we can already create lots of things which have some behavioural similarities, there are machines which can be programmed to mimic behaviours like avoiding obstacles, play chess, build cars, 'communicate' with each other like we're doing now. We don't assume they have experience. If we could build a machine so good at mimicking some behaviours we couldn't tell the difference, how do we know it's crossed some line into experiencing. And why would we believe similarity/mimicry of function and behaviour alone enables it to?

Many of the technologies we've devised were first observed as natural phenomena --- fire, electricity, flight, many others. We've learned to extract the physical principles involved in those phenomena and apply them artificially. E.g., we learned that heavier-than-air objects may fly from birds, but (at least after Icarus) did not assume feathers and muscles are necessary to enable it.

Good point. The unanswered question is - does that apply beyond physical technologies copying aspects of natural physical functions.

Where-as if we had an actual explanation which included the necessary and sufficient conditions, then we could test for those. We could make a consciousness-o-meter and not have to guess. Well, that's the problem --- there can be no such meter, because phenomenal experience is inherently, impenetrably private. Behavior is the only evidence we will ever have, and if the behavior of an AI system is indistinguishable from that of a human, then it would only be stubbornness that deters us from attributing consciousness to it.

Not stubbornness. Just because it's the best we can do doesn't mean it's reliable. We might be forced to act as if it's reliable, but we should realise that's what we're doing.

*It's OK to say we don't know.
Are we willing to say that about other people?*

We don't know, but we have the additional physical similarity, which would turn the question around. If we're so similar physically, what difference could account for them not being?

I just want a robot servant, is that too much to ask! But we should err on the side of caution, if there's enough evidence to think they have experiential states, they should in principle have commensurate moral consideration, probably including rights. (Just keep the off switch handy). Should we install such switches on humans too, at birth?

Only some. I have a list...

CHAPTER 2.304.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 5:18 PM

2.269. by Terrapin Station

There's a difference between observing something third-person and observing something first-person, where the latter is the observational circumstance where you're identical to the thing in question.

Oh, I'm sure there is. But what is being observed is not the observer, but qualia and other "mental" phenomena. Apparently you're identifying the observer with the observed, or perhaps the brain states of the observer with what is observed. But the latter begs the question. What is observed, or experienced, immediately and directly, are qualia, thoughts, memories, etc., which are not identical to any brain state per any accepted criterion for identity. They may be (and surely are) caused by brain states, produced by brain states, but they are not identical with them. No third person observes my qualia, thoughts, etc. There is no perspective on those but my own.


There's only one thing that exists where we can be in a first-person observational circumstance with respect to it: the subset of our brain functions that amount to mentality. That's the only thing for which we can have the perspective of BEING the thing in question.

You're again begging the question. When I experience a certain quale I am not observing "a subset of my brain function." I may hypothesize the latter in order to explain what I'm experiencing, but it is not WHAT I'm experiencing. Moreover, being something does not entail having a perspective on it.

You can't characterize manifest differences in properties between 2 (nominally) different things as "differences in perspectives." Morning vs. evening perspectives on Venus do not alter the planet's properties. Nor can you claim differences in perspective as accounting for observed differences unless the perspectives are of the same thing. But no third person can have a perspective on my qualia --- unless he begs the question by equating them with something he *can* observe.

CHAPTER 2.305.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:53 PM



2.301. by GE Morton

Oh, I agree. But that is not what you were saying earlier. Earlier you were claiming that the properties of a thing were dependent upon spatio-temporal reference points.

That's still what I'm saying. Properties are a factor of materials, relations and processes. As any of those things change, so do the properties in question. There's no way that any properties are from either no or all relations. Any spatiotemporal reference point is a unique relation to the item in question, and it's not just one relation that changes from any arbitrary spatiotemporal reference point.

Well, first, it makes no sense to speak of perspectives when there is no possibility of more than one. For qualia, there is no possibility of any perspective on it other than that of the person experiencing one.

At any given spatiotemporal point, there will only be one perspective from which qualia appear as *qualia*, but that doesn't mean that qualia do not appear as something else from another spatial perspective at the same time. They do.

Qualia are not different than the person in question. They're an aspect of that person. A property of their conscious experience, from the perspective of being that conscious experience.

CHAPTER 2.306.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:04 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).



2.288. by Gertie

If you believe your own experience doesn't exist, you're beyond confused.

Except I don't believe that my own experience doesn't exist. I just happen to think that believers in qualia have invented a purely ideological perspective on experience that I find ridiculous and incompatible with a scientific approach to understanding the mind. If it can't be measured, even in principle, then a property is make believe to my way of thinking.

CHAPTER 2.307.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:14 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).



2.289. by Sculptor1

The whole idea that pain is subjective, and the realisation that colours are not "out there" but only experienced in the head is pure science.

We've known this for a long, long time and didn't need to be told by scientists that this was the case. It was never a scientific discovery.

2.289. by Sculptor1

And it was Charles Sanders Peirce a SCIENTIST who first coined the phrase.

So yes it was in a scientific paper.

*Check your ignorance before you make an **** of yourself*

Thanks for the education, but I very much doubt that any such paper would be considered "scientific" rather than a work in philosophy. Do you have a link to it so I can read the source?

And this may be a quibble you can justifiably dismiss, but wasn't Peirce really more of a philosopher who was fluent in science rather than someone whose main contributions were scientific? Sort of a 19th century Daniel Dennett?

CHAPTER 2.308.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:32 PM

What sort of material would you say is pertinent? Can you give any sort of reference to it?

Very well..

I'd say Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta are the best to get to the gist of it (the real Advaita, not this neo-Advaitan or pseudo-Advaitan shallow nonsense). But Western interpreters like Alan Watts and Rupert Spira are pretty good, they have many talks online where they are trying to eff the ineffable. If one is somewhat smart, then one doesn't have to waste time by reading a million books or engaging in a 40-year meditation routine or whatever.


If you listen to them, you'll notice that all they seem to be saying is a bunch of rather random gibberish, accompanied by nonsensical hand-waving. With some shallow everyday wisdom here and there that everyone already knows. But what they are actually talking about is a very deep subject, and everything they say actually makes perfect sense and is logically structured.

Again, they are trying to eff the ineffable, all nondual talk is kind of metaphorical. They try to express nondualism in dualistic language, because that's how we communicate. Language is inherently dualistic, all Western philosophy is inherently dualistic, and therefore has an inherent fatal flaw which prevents it from ever succeeding.

Or alternatively, there is the route which I took, QM has proven a century ago that existence is either nondual, or we have to subscribe to some batshit crazy literal magical mind-physical world dualism. Don't try to understand how QM has shown this, it's probably above your conception. I learned about Advaita later, after I found out that this is how the world works.

CHAPTER 2.309.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:38 PM



2.308. by Atla

2.302. by Terrapin Station

What sort of material would you say is pertinent? Can you give any sort of reference to it?

Very well..

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I'm actually pretty fond of Zen Buddhism, which I first got into via a martial arts teacher all the way back when I was a teen. Though I don't agree with every aspect of every view, obviously. I'm not very familiar with Advaita Vedanta. I'll have to check that out.

CHAPTER 2.310.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:41 PM

2.308. by Atla

Very well..

I'd say Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta are the best to get to the gist of it (the real Advaita, not this neo-Advaitan or pseudo-Advaitan shallow nonsense). But Western interpreters like Alan Watts and Rupert Spira are pretty good, they have many talks online where they are trying to eff the ineffable. If one is somewhat smart, then one doesn't have to waste time by reading a million books or engaging in a 40-year meditation routine or whatever.

If you listen to them, you'll notice that all they seem to be saying is a bunch of rather random gibberish, accompanied by nonsensical hand-waving. With some shallow everyday wisdom here and there that everyone already knows. But what they are actually talking about is a very deep subject, and everything they say actually makes perfect sense and is logically structured.

Again, they are trying to eff the ineffable, all nondual talk is kind of metaphorical. They try to express nondualism in dualistic language, because that's how we communicate. Language is inherently dualistic, all Western philosophy is inherently dualistic, and therefore has an inherent fatal flaw which prevents it from ever succeeding.

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Unfortunately, most Advaita talk online will be the pseudo-Advaita, where they use the words but don't understand what they are pointing to.

Personally I also very much like Peter Russell's 'The primacy of consciousness' talk. He is very scientific minded like I am, and went through a very similar route, when investigating the nature of consciousness.

CHAPTER 2.311.

~



2.310. by Atla

2.309. by Terrapin Station

I'm actually pretty fond of Zen Buddhism, which I first got into via a martial arts teacher all the way back when I was a teen. Though I don't agree with every aspect of every view, obviously. I'm not very familiar with Advaita Vedanta. I'll have to check that out.

Unfortunately, most Advaita talk online will be the pseudo-Advaita, where they use the words but don't understand what they are pointing to.

Personally I also very much like Peter Russell's 'The primacy of consciousness' talk. He is very scientific minded like I am, and went through a very similar route, when investigating the nature of consciousness.

Okay, thanks--I'll check Russell out.

CHAPTER 2.312.

~

Sculptor1 on  Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 9:46 PM



2.307. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.289. by Sculptor1

The whole idea that pain is subjective, and the realisation that colours are not "out there" but only experienced in the head is pure science.

We've known this for a long, long time and didn't need to be told by scientists that this was the case. It was never a scientific discovery.

{/quote}

Your ignorance is astounding

Thanks for the education, but I very much doubt that any such paper would be considered "scientific" rather than a work in philosophy. Do you have a link to it so I can read the source?

Your doubt is only based on your ignorance.

Are you a flat earther too?

Educate yourself and come back.

And this may be a quibble you can justifiably dismiss, but wasn't Peirce really more of a philosopher who was fluent in science rather than someone whose main contributions were scientific? Sort of a 19th century Daniel Dennett?

Get a life

~

evolution on 🕒 Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 10:12 PM

2.292. by Terrapin Station

2.291. by evolution

You still do NOT get it.

I KNOW what a 'philosophical context' is, from my perspective. All I was trying to do was understand better what your perspective of that phrase is. If you can NOT or will NOT back up, explain, or elaborate on what you say and claim on a philosophy forum, then WHY post in one?

So what is your "'what is' presentation" for propositional knowledge in this philosophical context, per how you think about philosophical contexts?

My view is; because absolutely EVERY thing is relative to the observer, then so to is propositional knowledge.

Therefore, whatever is in agreement and accepted as being propositional knowledge, then that is what is propositional knowledge, to those people.

See, unlike you who is looking for what is 'propositional knowledge', subjectively, I much prefer to instead just look at 'what IS', and express 'THAT', objectivity.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 3:04 AM

2.271. by Wosname

I think this is a damned difficult topic.

Indeed it is. Perhaps the first step is to develop a rigorous vocabulary and a cogent framework for discussing it.

I'm not sure you are wrong but I have some doubts all the same. I lean towards a particular version of identity theory, (embodied identity theory), so I think I broadly agree with TS, but I've not yet completely fallen over. I am not sure whether detailed description of the necessary and sufficient conditions for consciousness is needed to resolve matters as you suggest.

If "sufficient" is taken to imply a reductive explanation, then no explanation will ever be sufficient, since that type of explanation is impossible, for the reasons given earlier.

Firstly, the effects of some drugs, brain injuries, sleep, dreaming and brain scans etc. suggest that perceptual, cognitive and affective states are linked with brain processes, and experiment suggests a direct link. Change the brain and you can change the experience and vice versa. I think this gives identity theory some plausibility.

I fully agree with your first sentence there. There is abundant evidence demonstrating links between brain states and "mental" phenomena; the first is clearly the cause of the latter. But a cause-and-effect relationship is not an identity relationship, and offers no support at all for the latter relationship, that I can see.

A concern is that objective accounts of an experience may fail to capture the subjective nature of the experience. The subjective appears to be something extra that needs explaining. But as has been pointed out, if consciousness is identical to a brain state then brain processes do not generate or produce consciousness, they are consciousness (and vice versa). If X generates Y it is not identical to Y. In your example GEM, if bees or the things that they do generate honey, then bees or the things they do are not honey. But identity is symmetrical and if consciousness is a brain process, it is not an extra property. There is no new thing to look for. (Gertie, your point about a homunculus is well taken).

It is true, of course, that IF "consciousness is identical to a brain state then brain processes do not generate or produce consciousness, they are consciousness (and vice versa)." But whether they ARE identical is what needs to be resolved. So we need to decide what are the criteria for calling two numerically distinguishable things identical. I've given two common ones, Leibniz's "identity of indiscernibles," and the "is of composition" sense ("lightning is a stream of electrons"). Mental phenomena and brain states are not identical per either of those criteria. So some new criterion would be required to establish that identity (hopefully, one that does not do violence to the common understanding of the term).

The claim, then, is that some objective events are identical to some subjective events. The fact that there are different ways of encountering a thing does not necessarily mean we are encountering different things. A thing may be encountered subjectively as lived experience, or objectively as when observed by another.

That is perfectly true of external things. But there may be some confusion as to what "thing" we are discussing. Yes, the red rose I observe can be the same as the red rose you describe to me. But that rose is not the "thing" we are seeking to identify with a brain state. Instead, the thing in question is the particular, distinctive, phenomenal sensation I experience when perceiving that rose, or anything else with that color. There is no "objective," or third-party perspective on that. Similarly, while you can give me a verbal description of the rose, you can't give me a verbal description of the distinctive phenomenal sensation YOU experience when beholding it --- but I will assume, from your behavior and your report, that you have one. We both have subjective, distinctive sensations when perceiving an object with that color. We can't describe those sensations in any informative, non-circular terms; they are ineffable. But because we use the same words to refer to them we can talk about the (external) things that elicit those sensations (Wittgenstein's "beetle in a box" discussion is worth reviewing here).

Note that, in viewing consciousness as a brain process, mentality is not somehow eliminated by the analysis as some have argued. We are not left with just the objective physical description of events. The physical process is also a mental event.

Well, that begs the question. What sense of "is" is that? The physical process surely gives rise to the mental event, but to say it "is" the mental event requires some criterion for identity, as mentioned above.

A difficulty is that some argument will not allow analysis involving anything other than the comparison of objective physical events even though (as I think you recognise) this may be inadequate to the task in hand. In other words I am concerned that, for some, identity is only permitted to be established by observed similar properties from an objective POV, and this will not allow, by definition almost, a different POV (e.g. one allowing that subjective experience could be identical to objective experience), simply on the grounds that the two perspectives are different.

As I argued with TP, above, the difference between two percepts can be explained as different points of view only if we've already established that both percepts are of the same thing. So we need to resolve the identity issue BEFORE we can speak of different POVs. Until then we're entitled to assume the difference is due to perceiving different things.

The brain may be modelling the external world, but identity theory proposes that this modelling just is the processing being done by the brain, not some extra epiphenomenal thing.

It is epiphenomenal in the sense that an induced magnetic field is epiphenomenal, but not in the sense of a physically superfluous "substance" as implied by some philosophical conceptions.

An external observer using a scanner to watch your brain working cannot experience what your brain is experiencing, since they can only experience what their own brain is experiencing. But this just is what it means to have different perspectives.

Caution --- that is not what it means to have different perspectives. It makes sense to speak of different perspectives only when there is no question that the different perceptions are of the same thing. If we assume in advance they are in this case we're question-begging.

The inside of your house does not look like the outside of your house, but it is your house all the same (assuming you have one).

Do you see what you're doing there? Of course the inside of the house looks different from the outside. It will look different from any different reference point. But, by your hypothesis, those viewpoints are all of one thing. That hypothesis is not justified with respect to mental phenomena and brain states; it is precisely what is in question. Until that question is answered we can't speak (sensibly) of different perspectives.

If this works then there seems nothing missing here. Some say you can't see a thought. But by this view you can, though you can only directly experience your own. This does allow that a clever external observer may be able to decode brain activity, and tell what the thought or subjective experience is likely to be, and researchers are making progress here. I have read that currently, decoding of information gained by brain scans enables researchers to determine what playing card someone is holding with better than 90% accuracy, and it is thought that in the future brain decoding will be capable of extracting information an investigator might want, such as the encryption code to a file or the combination to a safe.

I think you're right on that point. There is every reason to think that we will be able, at some point, to correlate measurable brain states with particular qualia, thoughts, knowledge, etc. I.e., we will be able, by inducing or observing a particular pattern in a particular set of neurons, to predict that

the subject is now experiencing a sensation of red, or the smell of cinnamon, or is thinking about his kid, etc. But such correlations don't establish an *identity* between the brain events and the subjective "feel" or quality of those sensations, though it could confirm a causal relationship between them --- one likely to be individual and idiosyncratic: what neural pattern elicits a "red" experience in Alfie likely would not do so in Bruno. Those correlations don't even address the identity question.

How do we decide on identity? Well, are we justified in saying (in time honoured tradition) that the morning star is the same as the evening star? Even without powerful telescopes, when we examine where and when we encounter these two things it seems we are (something recognised it seems even in ancient Sumeria). And again, we may ask whether these two things, the physical and mental, are the same thing. Again, we answer by looking at how we encounter these things, and the evidence and reasoning outlined above seems to me to justify the view that they probably are.

We are justified in identifying the morning star with the evening star because all of the properties we can observe and measure of those (nominally two) objects are the same. They satisfy Leibniz's criterion for identity. That is not the case with qualia and their correlated brain states; those could not be more different. Suppose we discover (improbably) that a certain neural activity pattern consistently produces a "red" experience for everyone for whom that pattern is active. Suppose Frank Jackson's Mary's vast knowledge of optics and neurology includes that information. She has never seen colors, and so her brain has never manifested that pattern. She agrees to allow a researcher to induce that pattern electronically in her brain. Will she be able to predict what that experience will "be like" for her? What distinctive sensation will appear to her consciousness? Or will she say, "Ah! So THAT is what red looks like!" That is what knowledge of brain states can't predict.

To play with your thought experiment, it seems possible that if we are looking at a screen showing our brain activity while looking at the screen, it may be an example whereby both the objective and subjective can be objectively seen to coincide. Flash up a red square, a blue triangle, a green circle or whatever and see the changes in brain activity that result. This would seem to support mind-brain identity.

No, it doesn't. It only establishes mind-brain correlation, and perhaps causality, as pointed out above.

I think this disagreement boils down to what is the relevant criterion for declaring two (nominal) things to be identical. I know of no others than the two I mentioned, and minds and brains are not identical per either of those.

Thanks for a thoughtful post!

CHAPTER 2.315.

~

2.314. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 4:04 am

Suppose Frank Jackson's Mary's vast knoweldge of optics and neurology includes that information. She has never seen colors, and so her brain has never manifested that pattern. She agrees to allow a researcher to induce that pattern electronically in her brain. Will she be able to predict what that experience will "be like" for her? What distinctive sensation will appear to her counsciousness? Or will she say, "Ah! So THAT is what red looks like!" That is what knowledge of brain states can't predict.

We agree subjective experience is a private POV and, in Mary's case it seems to me that when Mary first learns what red is (to her, as experienced by her), then that learning will also be a change in her brain and would not happen without it. It remains a private experience of Mary's. She might then map that experience to language in the same way that people would map Wittgenstein's beetle.

2.314. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 4:04 am

I think this disagreement boils down to what is the relevant criterion for declaring two (nominal) things to be identical. I know of no others than the two I mentioned, and minds and brains are not identical per either of those.

I think you have the nub of the problem. My concern is that the criteria for identity you prefer just will not do here. They work well, perhaps, where we compare two objective viewpoints. I don't think it can work for the subjective / objective identity of the kind I'm suggesting. If we hold to those criteria, (and you do and welcome), I think the answer always comes out that mind and brain are separate things. If we declare those criteria inadequate or inappropriate then a resolution of the kind I suggest may be possible. You pays your money as they say. I see no further resolution so I will hold to my viewpoint (but your argument is not lost on me and I repeat, I am not certain of matters in this area). Thank you, also, for your considered reply.

CHAPTER 2.316.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 3:56 PM



2.313. by evolution

Therefore, whatever is in agreement and accepted as being propositional knowledge, then that is what is propositional knowledge, to those people.

And do you have any idea what is in agreement and accepted as being propositional knowledge? (By the way, you know that I'm asking you re a characterization of what propositional knowledge is, somewhat a la a definition, I'm not asking you to "list some propositional knowledge," right?)

CHAPTER 2.317.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 4:35 PM

2.311. by Terrapin Station

Okay, thanks--I'll check Russell out.

Well there's also this www.scienceandnonduality.com

They are now holding yearly conferences where scientists and nondual philosophers etc. can meet. I watched a few speeches and found them a bit shallow, but that's rather unavoidable I guess, at least it's a start.

CHAPTER 2.318.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 4:45 PM

2.317. by Atla

2.311. by Terrapin Station

Okay, thanks--I'll check Russell out.

Well there's also this www.scienceandnonduality.com

They are now holding yearly conferences where scientists and nondual philosophers etc. can meet. I watched a few speeches and found them a bit shallow, but that's rather unavoidable I guess, at least it's a start.

And looks like they couldn't get rid of Deepak Chopra, which makes them look pretty bad. They can't just ban him I suppose.

CHAPTER 2.319.

~

evolution on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 8:12 PM

2.316. by Terrapin Station

2.313. by evolution

Therefore, whatever is in agreement and accepted as being propositional knowledge, then that is what is propositional knowledge, to those people.

And do you have any idea what is in agreement and accepted as being propositional knowledge?

In relation to who, exactly?

You surely are not still under some sort of assumption or illusion that there is only one answer regarding things of this nature, are you?

2.316. by Terrapin Station

(By the way, you know that I'm asking you re a characterization of what propositional knowledge is, somewhat a la a definition, I'm not asking you to "list some propositional knowledge," right?)

Yes.

Do you know that you have not answered my clarifying question regarding propositional knowledge yet? Or, have you forgotten this?

CHAPTER 2.320.

~

Terrapin Station on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 8:36 PM



2.319. by evolution

In relation to who, exactly?

Just answer in relation to whatever analysis of propositional knowledge you personally use-- whoever you agree with, let's say.

CHAPTER 2.321.

~

evolution on  Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 10:57 PM

But if you can NOT or will NOT clarify in relation to who or what EXACTLY you pose your questions in relation to, then you will NOT be able to FULLY comprehend and understand my responses.

Your ASSUMPTIONS and BELIEFS will NOT allow 'you' to SEE the full and whole picture here.

See, the more specific your questions are, then the more specific my answers can and will be.

By the way, you have yet to even begin answering the clarifying question I posed to you.

CHAPTER 2.322.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 2:19 AM

2.315. by Wosname

We agree subjective experience is a private POV and, in Mary's case it seems to me that when Mary first learns what red is (to her, as experienced by her), then that learning will also be a change in her brain and would not happen without it. It remains a private experience of Mary's. She might then map that experience to language in the same way that people would map Wittgenstein's beetle.

Yes, she will form a memory of that quale, and thus be able recognize the next red thing she sees as being the same color as the rose. The connection between "mind states" and brain states is 2-way.

I think you have the nub of the problem. My concern is that the criteria for identity you prefer just will not do here. They work well, perhaps, where we compare two objective viewpoints. I don't think it can work for the subjective / objective identity of the kind I'm suggesting. If we hold to those criteria, (and you do and welcome), I think the answer always comes out that mind and brain are separate things. If we declare those criteria inadequate or inappropriate then a resolution of the kind I suggest may be possible.

If we wish to insist on identity even though those criteria --- which define that term --- are inadequate, then we must have some alternative criterion in mind, which we would be obliged to articulate. Surely we can't apply that term *ad hoc* in a situation where it clearly doesn't apply when understood with its common meaning, merely because we see no acceptable alternatives.

In one of her recent posts on this subject Gertie wrote, "To me the two most obvious ways of accounting for phenomenal experience is that it's somehow reducible to fundamental material stuff, or it's fundamental itself."

That leads her to consider panpsychism. I think the insistence on mind/brain identity is motivated by the same dilemma --- either mental phenomena are reducible to physical phenomena, or we're forced to dualism (of which panpsychism is one offshoot). Identity seems a way to escape that dilemma.

We need to get "outside that box" and rethink the issue afresh, beginning with 4 postulates:

1. Mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, though there is a causal relation between them.
2. Mental phenomena are not identical with physical phenomena.

3. Dualism is false, i.e., there is no "mental" (or "spiritual," "non-physical,") substance, or "stuff," of which qualia and other mental phenomena are constituted.

4. Though mental phenomena are not reducible to or derivable from the laws of physics, those laws are adequate to explain them *to the extent they are explicable*.

Begin with those posits and see where we can get from there.

CHAPTER 2.323.

~

Wosname on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10:13 AM

2.322. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 3:19 am

Yes, she will form a memory of that quale, and thus be able recognize the next red thing she sees as being the same color as the rose. The connection between "mind states" and brain states is 2-way.

If we wish to insist on identity even though those criteria --- which define that term --- are inadequate, then we must have some alternative criterion in mind, which we would be obliged to articulate. Surely we can't apply that term ad hoc in a situation where it clearly doesn't apply when understood with its common meaning, merely because we see no acceptable alternatives.

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That leads her to consider panpsychism. I think the insistence on mind/brain identity is motivated by the same dilemma --- either mental phenomena are reducible to physical phenomena, or we're forced to dualism (of which panpsychism is one offshoot). Identity seems a way to escape that dilemma.

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4. Though mental phenomena are not reducible to or derivable from the laws of physics, those laws are adequate to explain them to the extent they are explicable.

Begin with those posits and see where we can get from there.

My concern is that the 4 are not obviously compatible. If we accept 1 and 2, the physical causes the mental but is not identical to it then what is it you have caused? Are we not forced into dualism? The mental seems defined as something different to the physical, so if this is not dualism, which I like you resist, where are we? If we allow some physical processes can also be mental ones (even if we don't understand how) then we get around this problem though some mystery remains. It does not follow as a matter of logic that all physical processes must be mental ones. We are not forced to accept Panpsychism though I am not here to deride it.

I think the evidence is consistent with identity, (depending on your criteria for identity as per), and this is simpler, one mystery, rather than two (i.e. what is this separate mentality as well as how is it caused). I think we agree that perception and thinking are not things that passively happen to an organism, they are things an organism does. What it does is physical, and some of that physical is also mental. Point 4., that mentality is not derivable from the laws of physics though these laws are adequate to explain it is interesting but needs unpacking. Could we argue that a frog is not directly derivable from the laws of physics but physics can explain a frog in the context of evolution? If so, that is not too different from embodied identity theory applied to mentality. But I may be misinterpreting your meaning. If I am then I wonder if this is not dualist epiphenomenalism of some stripe after all? And if you agree that the connection between mind states and brain states is two way, we seem to be considering interactionist dualism and pondering how non-physical mental states can influence a physical system. One mystery seems better I think. But I accept I do not have the answer to it.

CHAPTER 2.324.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10:37 AM



2.321. *by evolution*

But if you can NOT or will NOT clarify in relation to who or what EXACTLY you pose your questions in relation to,

But I just did: Just answer in relation to whatever analysis of propositional knowledge you personally use--whoever you agree with, let's say.

CHAPTER 2.325.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10:49 AM



Mary's room, by the way, however we started talking about that, is a rather stupid thought experiment. On the view that qualia are physical phenomena (which is the view I and many others share) it's not possible for Mary to gain all physical knowledge of color without experiencing color. "All physical knowledge of x" wouldn't at all be limited to some set of

propositions, and as if it would make any sense in the first place to somehow speak of "all possible propositions about x." (The idea of that is absurd.)

Knowledge consists of experiential knowledge-by-acquaintance and performative how-to-knowledge, too, and knowledge-by-acquaintance is particularly pertinent here.

At any rate, the notion that any set of propositions captures everything about any particular other phenomena, no matter how simple, is absurd as well, and shows a lack of analyzing what propositions are, what their relationship to other things is, and how that relationship works.

Mary's room gives the impression of a ridiculous straw man where the creator of the thought experiment hasn't the slightest understanding of what the other side is actually claiming.

CHAPTER 2.326.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10:55 AM



2.322. by GE Morton

2. *Mental phenomena are not identical with physical phenomena.*

3. *Dualism is false, i.e., there is no "mental" (or "spiritual," "non-physical,") substance, or "stuff," of which qualia and other mental phenomena are constituted.*

Those two are conjointly incoherent, hence why epiphenomenalism is incoherent. You can't both say that x is not identical to y, yet x is not somehow something different than y. If x is not identical to y, x is something else, something at least partially its own thing ("x stuff.")

CHAPTER 2.327.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 2:00 PM



2.317. by Atla

Well there's also this www.scienceandnonduality.com

I just followed that link, and Malwarebytes said "Website blocked due to reputation". I decided not to proceed, but posted this because I thought we should be aware of a possible problem?

CHAPTER 2.328.

~

Wosname on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 2:20 PM

2.327. by *Pattern-chaser*

Pattern-chaser » 19 minutes ago

Atla wrote: ↑Yesterday, 5:35 pm

Well there's also this www.scienceandnonduality.com

I just followed that link, and Malwarebytes said "Website blocked due to reputation". I decided not to proceed, but posted this because I thought we should be aware of a possible problem?

Thanks for the heads-up.

CHAPTER 2.329.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 2:53 PM

2.325. by *Terrapin Station*

Mary's room, by the way, however we started talking about that, is a rather stupid thought experiment. On the view that qualia are physical phenomena (which is the view I and many others share) it's not possible for Mary to gain all physical knowledge of color without experiencing color.

The theory stipulates that she "knows all there is to know about neurology and the physics of light" EXCEPT what a perception of color "looks like." That exception is built into the scenario, the point of which is to ask whether she can derive that information from the other knowledge she has.

At any rate, the notion that any set of propositions captures everything about any particular other phenomena, no matter how simple, is absurd as well, and shows a lack of analyzing what propositions are, what their relationship to other things is, and how that relationship works.

There is no claim that she "knows everything about" the subject matter. The claim is that she knows "all there is to know," i.e., what is generally known by experts in those fields (except what a color percept "looks like"); that she is herself an expert in those fields.

BTW, being an expert doesn't require knowledge by acquaintance of the subject matter. E.g., a physician doesn't have to be a cancer victim to be an expert oncologist.

Your complaint is pettifoggery.

CHAPTER 2.330.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 3:34 PM

2.327. by Pattern-chaser

2.317. by Atla

Well there's also this www.scienceandnonduality.com
I just followed that link, and Malwarebytes said "Website blocked due to reputation". I decided not to proceed, but posted this because I thought we should be aware of a possible problem?

Don't know what you did, here it says the site is clean according to 66 out of 66 engines.

[https://www.virustotal.com/gui/url/d6fc ... /detection](https://www.virustotal.com/gui/url/d6fc.../detection)

CHAPTER 2.331.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 4:17 PM

2.303. by Gertie

GE

I think we getting to repeating ourselves/agree to differ time?

Not yet!

So the fact that we humans create a model of the world which includes a model of our self within it, has no apparent bearing on how experience arises. Far less complex experiencing animals probably don't create such a model. It doesn't look like a necessary condition for mental experience. And if it's not, copying the creation of that 'model maker within the model' function won't make any difference to whether an AI can experience.

Well, sure it has a bearing. I think there is pretty widespread agreement among modern philosophers (hardcore naive realists excepted) that the phenomenal world, the world we experience, is a conceptual model of a hypothetical external, "noumenal" world which we can never experience directly. That experienced world is constructed of impressions --- sensations, concepts, feelings, etc. --- that are intangible, subjective, and intrinsically private, but which somehow represent, and are elicited by, states of affairs in that presumed external world (which includes one's --- presumed --- physical body). Hence a creature which can create such a model will be conscious, by definition.

And I disagree that "less complex animals don't create such a model." I think we should assume that any animal with a nervous system complex enough to support one does create such a model. Amoebae? No. Vertebrates and even some insects? Yes --- probably. Honeybees' brains consist of about 1 million neurons --- more than enough to construct at least a rough conceptual model of their environment. And they exhibit behaviors and capabilities that not long ago were thought to be restricted to primates.

<https://phys.org/news/2013-10-bee-brain...erior.html>

<https://jonlieffmd.com/blog/the-remarkable-bee-brain-2>

Yeah could be. It leaves you with the problem of not knowing if AI is the right type of wire.

Well, that is the central issue here --- how will we ever know, other than by observing the system's behavior? Do you really want a theory that leaves that question permanently open --- that is empirically unconfirmable and unfalsifiable?

*Maybe. But to assume the observable behaviour resulting from biological stuff and processes is less likely to be coincidental/superficial than the biological stuff and processes itself would be ****_ backwards imo.*

Well, that is not what I'm suggesting. I think that biological stuff, of a certain kind and arranged in certain ways, will produce consciousness. But also that non-biological stuff, or non-natural biological stuff will also produce consciousness, when arranged in analogous ways. And again, the only means we have, or will ever have (given what we do know about the problem) for deciding whether the biology is critical is by observing the system's behavior. You seem to be holding out for some future "transcendental" insight into this issue. But for now, and for the foreseeable future, behavior is all we have.

Pragmatically perhaps, but that doesn't make it reliable.

What would?

Look at this way - why do we assume other humans have experiences like us?

- They are physically almost identical, and brain scans show similar responses to similar stimuli, which match similar verbal reports to ours.

- Their observable behaviour is experientially understandable to us, in that we can imagine behaving similarly in similar circs.

It's all about similarity. That's why the hope is that if we create an AI sufficiently similar to a human, it will somehow capture the necessary and sufficient conditions for experience.

As pointed out before, your first similarity there is insufficient, and may be irrelevant. The brain-dead person is also physically similar to us, but not conscious --- a judgment we make based on the lack of conscious behavior. And we can correlate brain scan information with perceptual phenomena only if it results in observable behavior. That is the only means we have of knowing --- inferring --- what perceptual phenomena is occurring (in anyone other than ourselves).

Not stubbornness. Just because it's the best we can do doesn't mean it's reliable. We might be forced to act as if it's reliable, but we should realise that's what we're doing.

Still holding out for that transcendental insight, eh?

Should we install such switches on humans too, at birth?

Only some. I have a list...

:)

CHAPTER 2.332.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 4:40 PM

I think there is pretty widespread agreement among modern philosophers (hardcore naive realists excepted) that the phenomenal world, the world we experience, is a conceptual model of a hypothetical external, "noumenal" world which we can never experience directly.

Luckily, free thinkers don't have to be as inept as Kant and his followers.

There is no fundamental divide between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world. Meaning that the phenomenal world is a model of the external noumenal world, and also one with it (continuous with it), at the same time. The phenomenal world is already direct experience, it's a bit of the 'absolute reality'.

(unless we take the even more inept solipsism route, leading nowhere)

CHAPTER 2.333.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 5:18 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.312. by Sculptor1

2.307. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

We've known this for a long, long time and didn't need to be told by scientists that this was the case. It was never a scientific discovery.

[/quote]

Your ignorance is astounding

Your doubt is only based on your ignorance.

Are you a flat earther too?

Educate yourself and come back.

Get a life

I guess I was right after all. Thanks for confirming I was right to be suspicious of your claims, since you can't or won't back them up.

To wit:

Peirce was a philosopher, not a scientist.

Qualia were invented in a paper that was philosophical by nature, not scientific (i.e., it referenced no studies, no experiments, contained no detailed anatomical claims, etc.).

I am happy to be corrected, but childish accusations of ignorance not backed with any attempt at scholarship are essentially self-refuting.

CHAPTER 2.334.

~

Sculptor1 on  Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 5:32 PM



2.333. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Peirce was a philosopher, not a scientist.

Let's face it . You did not have a clue how the concept of qualia came about. When I informed you, you got defensive.

Peirce was a scientist, and like all the best most interesting scientists, they all have an interest in the philosophical implications of their scientific work.

Science is after all natural philosophy.

Grow up.

~

Faustus5 on  Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 5:44 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).

2.334. by Sculptor1

2.333. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

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Science is after all natural philosophy.

Grow up.

What scientific contributions did Peirce make to his field of science? What field was it?

What scientific studies, experiments, or anatomical discussions occurred in the paper by him which mention qualia for the first time?

By the way, it's perfectly okay for qualia to be a non-scientific concept first articulated in a philosophical paper. I don't know why you are so desperate to misrepresent the history of this term. Must be filling some sort of weird need.

~

Sculptor1 on  Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 5:48 PM



2.335. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.334. by Sculptor1

*Let's face it . You did not have a clue how the concept of qualia came about. When I informed you, you got defensive.
Peirce was a scientist, and like all the best most interesting scientists, they all have an interest in the philosophical implications of their scientific work.
Science is after all natural philosophy.*

Grow up.

What scientific contributions did Peirce make to his field of science? What field was it?

Do your own reading.

Like I said above. Educate yourself,

CHAPTER 2.337.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 7:02 PM

Woss

I think you have the nub of the problem. My concern is that the criteria for identity you prefer just will not do here. They work well, perhaps, where we compare two objective viewpoints. I don't think it can work for the subjective / objective identity of the kind I'm suggesting. If we hold to those criteria, (and you do and welcome), I think the answer always comes out that mind and brain are separate things. If we declare those criteria inadequate or inappropriate then a resolution of the kind I suggest may be possible. You pays your money as they say. I see no further resolution so I will hold to my viewpoint (but your argument is not lost on me and I repeat, I am not certain of matters in this area). Thank you, also, for your considered reply.

A Physicalist Identity Theory which has to ignore physics and how we understand identity has a lot of explaining to do.

As a wholecloth "What if..." hypothesis it's very appealing, it solves the problem at a stroke. But as with many of these What If hypotheses and Isms, once you start to ask how it works, how it explains experience rather than how it characterises it, you hit problems. Or rather the Hard Problem.

The perspective based approach notes there are different perspectives because experiential states exist. It analogises from objects appearing differently to an observer depending on their physical relationship, which we understand. But it doesn't address the Hard Problem - how and why does experience manifest.

An explanation of that should be able to tell us if rocks experience, for example. Because it would tell us if this first person 'what it's like' perspective is present in all objects, or just some. If just some, why just some. Or it might tell us it's something about the relational interaction between objects which somehow results in experience, or whatever. But it's not an explanation, so it doesn't tell us anything of the how (the Hard Problem), which is the mystery we are trying to answer.

CHAPTER 2.338.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 7:57 PM

As for the Hard problem, you have to turn it inside out to 'resolve' it. They always try to figure out how experience arises from something as fundamental as physical stuff. But it's experience that's fundamental, and the idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience.

Physical stuff is simply a cognitive overlay, a map consisting of 'things', like protons and fields. We use this map to talk about the terrain. But the terrain is actually void of 'things', 'thing'-ness is a feature of human thinking.

Imo physical stuff is maybe best thought of as a structural description of the world. But a structural description of the world is not the world itself, that's why the Hard problem is kinda silly. Also, that's why it's insufficient to simply say that the spatio-temporal coordinates are different, when trying to solve the Hard problem.

CHAPTER 2.339.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 8:25 PM

viewtopic.php?p=367159#p367159

This is an interesting post but I can't quite get a handle on what to say about it yet. So I'm going to mark it here for now and hopefully return to it.

CHAPTER 2.340.

~

Wosname on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:02 PM

2.337. by Gertie

y Gertie » Today, 8:02 pm

A Physicalist Identity Theory which has to ignore physics and how we understand identity has a lot of explaining to do.

As a wholecloth "What if..." hypothesis it's very appealing, it solves the problem at a stroke. But as with many of these What If hypotheses and Isms, once you start to ask how it works, how it explains experience rather than how it characterises it, you hit problems. Or rather the Hard Problem.

The perspective based approach notes there are different perspectives because experiential states exist. It analogises from objects appearing differently to an observer depending on their physical relationship, which we understand. But it doesn't address the Hard Problem - how and why does experience manifest.

An explanation of that should be able to tell us if rocks experience, for example. Because it would tell us if this first person 'what it's like' perspective is present in all objects, or just some. If just some, why just some. Or it might tell us it's something about the relational interaction between objects which somehow results in experience, or whatever. But it's not an explanation, so it doesn't tell us anything of the how (the Hard Problem), which is the mystery we are trying to answer.

I don't have an answer to the hard problem. I have never claimed to. I hear your dissatisfaction, and I share it, but I am not sure your criticism of identity theory is entirely fair.

Let me say at the outset that I don't write off Panpsychism, but it goes beyond what we have evidence for (I think) and just offers another mystery. I've not had time to check Atla's links yet. (Thanks though Atla. For now I'll run with and explain my worldview, but I am not knocking yours).

So - we know some physical things are conscious. It does not seem (to me at the moment) all physical things are. Consciousness seems linked to life and it seems likely that life may well have evolved to be this way. How did it manage to do it? Dunno. But it is the case that consciousness provides two perspectives (inside/subjective, and outside/objective), these do exist and these are fundamentally different just by virtue of being different perspectives. So I don't accept that physics is ignored. Rather it would seem a mistake to view this as an unbridgeable gap because of physics when the physics may not be the problem, the limits of the potentialities of matter are unknown, we have barely scratched the surface in our understanding of what brains do, and the evidence is that it is possible (brains have mentality) it's just we don't know how it is done.

I agree there's stuff we don't know, but that does not mean it can't be this way, it appears in fact that it is this way, all theories run up against the hard problem, but some seem to multiply problems which does not seem very helpful. So I'm running with it as a preferred option. Perception is what animals do. No-one fully understands how they do it, but that is not a bar to identity theory. What organisms perceive, the methods they use and the value they attach to the perceived information seems linked to their particular evolutionary niche, and so embodied identity theory seems a viable bet. It explains important aspects of conscious experience. And in this theory rocks do not have consciousness because there is no need for such an evolutionary

development in rocks. And there is no evidence rocks do have it (I say).

I am not dissing any other views. My preferred option has a problem, agreed, but its problems are no bigger than any other and I think they are probably less than most. So no, the theory has not solved the hard problem, and nor should it claim to. But that does not, I would argue, invalidate the theory. I've opted for what seems to me the most likely explanation. I accept I may have it wrong. I'm not sure I trust any claims to certainty here.

CHAPTER 2.341.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:11 PM



2.329. by GE Morton

2.325. by Terrapin Station

Mary's room, by the way, however we started talking about that, is a rather stupid thought experiment. On the view that qualia are physical phenomena (which is the view I and many others share) it's not possible for Mary to gain all physical knowledge of color without experiencing color.

The theory stipulates that she "knows all there is to know about neurology and the physics of light" EXCEPT what a perception of color "looks like." That exception is built into the scenario, the point of which is to ask whether she can derive that information from the other knowledge she has.

At any rate, the notion that any set of propositions captures everything about any particular other phenomena, no matter how simple, is absurd as well, and shows a lack of analyzing what propositions are, what their relationship to other things is, and how that relationship works.

There is no claim that she "knows everything about" the subject matter. The claim is that she knows "all there is to know," i.e., what is generally known by experts in those fields (except what a color percept "looks like"); that she is herself an expert in those fields.

BTW, being an expert doesn't require knowledge by acquaintance of the subject matter. E.g., a physician doesn't have to be a cancer victim to be an expert oncologist.

Your complaint is pettifoggery.

The thought experiment says, " She specializes in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires, let us suppose, all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like 'red', 'blue', and so on. "

Or in other words, "Mary has all the physical information concerning human color vision before her release."

(See <https://www.sfu.ca/~jillmc/JacksonfromJStore.pdf> and/or <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-knowledge/>)

If qualia are physical, which is what my side is proposing, then in absence of experiencing color

qualia, it's necessarily *not* the case that one has all the physical information there is to obtain, or that one has all the physical information concerning human color vision.

The thought experiment is idiotic.

CHAPTER 2.342.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:29 PM

Atla

As for the Hard problem, you have to turn it inside out to 'resolve' it. They always try to figure out how experience arises from something as fundamental as physical stuff. But it's experience that's fundamental, and the idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience.

Right, if experience is fundamental, how it is explained ends there.

Physical stuff is simply a cognitive overlay, a map consisting of 'things', like protons and fields. We use this map to talk about the terrain. But the terrain is actually void of 'things', 'thing'-ness is a feature of human thinking.

Imo physical stuff is maybe best thought of as a structural description of the world. But a structural description of the world is not the world itself, that's why the Hard problem is kinda silly. Also, that's why it's insufficient to simply say that the spatio-temporal coordinates are different, when trying to solve the Hard problem.

I agree that gets us out of the Hard Problem as we talk about it, and is a coherent hypothesis.

The problem I think it presents, is that everything we claim to be able to know *inter-subjectively* (which gets us out of solipsism), is rooted in treating the physical map as the territory. The model of the material world (which we know is at best flawed and limited) is the context where we can meet and talk and compare notes about what it's like to see a red apple and so on.

And I don't see *a route to being able to know* if the explanation that all that exists is this 'field of experience' (as I imagine it) is correct? Maybe IIT can discover the mathematical dimension where it exists, or QM come up with something... I don't think meditation or self-reflection is reliable evidence that only experience exists, because those can always (I think) be correlated with brain states - if some experiential state definitively can't, then that's whole new ball game.

It's the same old prob imo - how can we know?

CHAPTER 2.343.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:48 PM

2.337. by Gertie

y Gertie » Today, 8:02 pm

A Physicalist Identity Theory which has to ignore physics and how we understand identity has a lot of explaining to do.

As a wholecloth "What if..." hypothesis it's very appealing, it solves the problem at a stroke. But as with many of these What If hypotheses and Isms, once you start to ask how it works, how it explains experience rather than how it characterises it, you hit problems. Or rather the Hard Problem.

The perspective based approach notes there are different perspectives because experiential states exist. It analogises from objects appearing differently to an observer depending on their physical relationship, which we understand. But it doesn't address the Hard Problem – how and why does experience manifest.

An explanation of that should be able to tell us if rocks experience, for example. Because it would tell us if this first person 'what it's like' perspective is present in all objects, or just some. If just some, why just some. Or it might tell us it's something about the relational interaction between objects which somehow results in experience, or whatever. But it's not an explanation, so it doesn't tell us anything of the how (the Hard Problem), which is the mystery we are trying to answer.

I don't have an answer to the hard problem. I have never claimed to. I hear your dissatisfaction, and I share it, but I am not sure your criticism of identity theory is entirely fair.

Let me say at the outset that I don't write off Panpsychism, but it goes beyond what we have evidence for (I think) and just offers another mystery. I've not had time to check Atla's links yet. (Thanks though Atla. For now I'll run with and explain my worldview, but I am not knocking yours).

So – we know some physical things are conscious. It does not seem (to me at the moment) all physical things are. Consciousness seems linked to life and it seems likely that life may well have evolved to be this way. How did it manage to do it? Dunno. But it is the case that consciousness provides two perspectives (inside/subjective, and outside/objective), these do exist and these are fundamentally different just by virtue of being different perspectives. So I don't accept that physics is ignored. Rather it would seem a mistake to view this as an unbridgeable gap because of physics when the physics may not be the problem, the limits of the potentialities of matter are unknown, we have barely scratched the surface in our understanding of what brains do, and the evidence is that it is possible (brains have mentality) it's just we don't know how it is done.

I agree there's stuff we don't know, but that does not mean it can't be this way, it appears in fact that it is this way, all theories run up against the hard problem, but some seem to multiply problems which does not seem very helpful. So I'm running with it as a preferred option. Perception is what animals do. No-one fully understands how they do it, but that is not a bar to identity theory. What organisms perceive, the methods they use and the value they attach to the perceived information seems linked to their particular evolutionary niche, and so embodied identity theory seems a viable bet. It explains important aspects of conscious experience. And in this theory rocks do not have consciousness because there is no need for such an evolutionary development in rocks. And there is no evidence rocks do have it (I say).

I am not dissing any other views. My preferred option has a problem, agreed, but its problems are no

bigger than any other and I think they are probably less than most. So no, the theory has not solved the hard problem, and nor should it claim to. But that does not, I would argue, invalidate the theory. I've opted for what seems to me the most likely explanation. I accept I may have it wrong. I'm not sure I trust any claims to certainty here.

I'm fine with all of that. My personal mission is to challenge anybody who says they know the answer.

What I'd query here is how we can reasonably come to a preference for the best explanation?

What sort of criteria are appropriate, and why? That seems like something philosophy potentially can come to a consensus on (or maybe not). At the moment there's not even agreement on what wholecloth hypothesis we should be attempting to falsify, it's more akin to lots of ideas competing for likes, this one or that coming into and out of fashion.

CHAPTER 2.344.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:57 PM



2.342. by Gertie

Right, if experience is fundamental, how it is explained ends there.

On the presumption claiming something as fundamental is sufficient as an explanation, but then we have the problem of needing to explain everything that we didn't say was fundamental, and we still have the need to address what counts as an explanation, why it counts as an explanation, etc.

CHAPTER 2.345.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10:14 PM

2.344. by Terrapin Station

2.342. by Gertie

Right, if experience is fundamental, how it is explained ends there.

On the presumption claiming something as fundamental is sufficient as an explanation, but then we have the problem of needing to explain everything that we didn't say was fundamental, and we still have the need to address what counts as an explanation, why it counts as an explanation, etc.

Right. What it solves is the Hard Problem presented by monist materialism as described by physics (eg how can experience be reducible to/an emergent property/some other aspect of fundamental material stuff).

How it explains experience itself creates its own set of problems.

CHAPTER 2.346.

~

evolution on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 12:50 AM

2.324. by Terrapin Station

2.321. by evolution

But if you can NOT or will NOT clarify in relation to who or what EXACTLY you pose your questions in relation to,

But I just did: Just answer in relation to whatever analysis of propositional knowledge you personally use--whoever you agree with, let's say.

I do NOT have an analysis of propositional knowledge that I personally use.

CHAPTER 2.347.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 2:27 AM

2.332. by Atla

I think there is pretty widespread agreement among modern philosophers (hardcore naive realists excepted) that the phenomenal world, the world we experience, is a conceptual model of a hypothetical external, "noumenal" world which we can never experience directly.

Luckily, free thinkers don't have to be as inept as Kant and his followers.

There is no fundamental divide between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world.

You might explain how you understand the term "fundamental" (which term you also use problematically in the quote below). You probably also don't understand what the "noumenal" world is (it is not the external, physical world described by science).

The term "fundamental" is usually meant to denote something irreducible to anything simpler. But the phenomenal world is not reducible to the noumenal "world," even in principle --- because we have no knowledge whatsoever of that "world" ("realm" is a better term for the noumena; "world" has misleading connotations). Hence we can't derive any phenomena we might experience from it, or equate them with it.

Meaning that the phenomenal world is a model of the external noumenal world, and also one with it (continuous with it), at the same time.

That is incoherent. If it is distinguishable from it then it cannot be "at one with it at the same time." Nor can we say that it is "continuous" with the noumenal realm, since we don't know the extent of that realm. And, again, you seem to be confusing the "noumenal world" with the external, physical world described by science. You might try reading Kant more carefully.

The phenomenal world is already direct experience, it's a bit of the 'absolute reality'.

Yes, the phenomenal world is the world we perceive, experience. The noumenal realm is a realm of existence we *hypothesize* to exist to explain, supply a cause for, our percepts and other experiences --- no cause for them, or even for our very existence, being apparent *within* experience.

2.338. by Atla

As for the Hard problem, you have to turn it inside out to 'resolve' it. They always try to figure out how experience arises from something as fundamental as physical stuff. But it's experience that's fundamental, and the idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience.

Yes, experience is fundamental (as above defined), but it still requires an explanation --- some cause for it. Else we are trapped in solipsism. But you make a sound point with, "idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience." "Physical stuff" is indeed itself a conceptual construct. So we're trying to use mental constructs to explain themselves. Not a promising endeavor.

BTW, I myself used the term "conceptual model" in a misleading way in the quote above. A "conceptual model" is one consciously, deliberately constructed by us. The world described by science is a conceptual model. The model I described earlier is not a conceptual model; it is created subconsciously by our brains, becoming coherent in the first few months of life, and presented to us automatically. It becomes the world as we know it. Perhaps we can call it a "cognitive model."

Also, the term "qualia" is used by most (though perhaps not all) to refer only to the distinctive, singular sensations elicited by sensory inputs, which allow us to distinguish among them (colors, odors, flavors, sounds, etc.). Other mental phenomena, such as thoughts, knowledge, ideas, memories, etc., while raising many of the same issues as qualia, are not qualia.

Physical stuff is simply a cognitive overlay, a map consisting of 'things', like protons and fields. We use this map to talk about the terrain. But the terrain is actually void of 'things', 'thing'-ness is a feature of human thinking.

Well, your "terrain" there sounds much like Kant's noumenon. But we can't say anything about that "terrain," not even that it is "devoid of things."

Imo physical stuff is maybe best thought of as a structural description of the world. But a structural description of the world is not the world itself, that's why the Hard problem is kinda silly. Also, that's why it's insufficient to simply say that the spatio-temporal coordinates are different, when trying to solve the Hard problem.

The Hard Problem is hard when addressing it scientifically, because scientific methods presuppose, and were developed to investigate, objective, *public* phenomena. But qualia and other mental phenomena are intractably private, and not accessible to empirical methods. They are beyond their reach.

Faustus5 on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 12:17 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).

2.336. by Sculptor1

*Do your own reading.
Like I said above. Educate yourself,*

I did, and this just confirmed all of my suspicions that you were largely making things up.

Yeah, science was his day job. But we don't know about him for anything he did as a scientist, because nothing he did in that line of work was ever significant. We know him for his work in other fields, primarily in philosophy. This is why he is now and always has been known as a philosopher.

And no, you don't get to call "qualia" a scientific concept just because the guy who first threw the term around did science from 9 to 5 to pay rent and buy food. It was purely a creation of his work in philosophy, end of story.

I stand vindicated, and thanks for the opportunity.

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 4 9 .

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 1:29 PM

2.341. by Terrapin Station

If qualia are physical, which is what my side is proposing, then in absence of experiencing color qualia, it's necessarily not the case that one has all the physical information there is to obtain, or that one has all the physical information concerning human color vision.

If qualia are physical, "as your side is proposing," then it is true that Mary does not have all the available physical information about them, since she's never experienced the qualia for colors. But whether they are "physical" is what is in question. Hence your complaint begs the question.

And, of course, qualia are not physical in the everyday sense of that term. Nor are they physical in the "philosophical" sense, not being derivable from or explicable via the laws of physics.

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 5 0 .

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 1:40 PM

2.349. by GE Morton

If qualia are physical, "as your side is proposing," then it is true that Mary does not have all the available physical information about them, since she's never experienced the qualia for colors. But whether they are "physical" is what is in question. Hence your complaint begs the question.



"She has all of the physical information, but the qualia is new information" is no less question-begging, because it assumes that qualia aren't physical. If we don't assume that, we can't come to the conclusion that the experience of qualia is new information despite the fact that she has all physical information.

Again, the thought experiment is stupid because of this.

And, of course, qualia are not physical in the everyday sense of that term. Nor are they physical in the "philosophical" sense, not being derivable from or explicable via the laws of physics.

The philosophical sense is not "derivable from or explicable via the laws of physics." Philosophical physicalism is in no way dependent on the scientific discipline of physics.

CHAPTER 2.351.

~

Sculptor1 on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 2:27 PM

2.348. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.336. by Sculptor1

Do your own reading.

Like I said above. Educate yourself,

I did, and this just confirmed all of my suspicions that you were largely making things up.

Yeah, science was his day job

It's worse than I thought. You might need to go back and get some remedial reading classes, first

CHAPTER 2.352.

~

Sculptor1 on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 2:31 PM



2.350. by Terrapin Station

2.349. by GE Morton

If qualia are physical, "as your side is proposing," then it is true that Mary does not have all the available physical information about them, since she's never experienced the qualia for colors. But whether they are "physical" is what is in question. Hence your complaint begs the question.

"She has all of the physical information, but the qualia is new information" is no less question-begging, because it assumes that qualia aren't physical. If we don't assume that, we can't come to the conclusion that the experience of qualia is new information despite the fact that she has all physical information.

Again, the thought experiment is stupid because of this.

And, of course, qualia are not physical in the everyday sense of that term. Nor are they physical in the "philosophical" sense, not being derivable from or explicable via the laws of physics.

The philosophical sense is not "derivable from or explicable via the laws of physics." Philosophical physicalism is in no way dependent on the scientific discipline of physics.

Qualia are physical. The thought experiment does not address that in any sense. Nor was it designed to.

It draws a distinction between what is experienced by FLESH and blood, and what can be learned by science.


Mary knows that red is light of x wavelength range, but she cannot know the which ball is blue and which ball is red with her eyes until someone tells her.

If nothing else it demonstrates the colour is not "out there" but internal.

Nothing can be advanced to say that the experience is no physical. Everything points to the fact that it is.

CHAPTER 2.353.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 2:39 PM



2.352. by Sculptor1

Qualia are physical. The thought experiment does not address that in any sense. Nor was it designed to.

"The knowledge argument aims to establish that conscious experience involves non-physical properties."

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-knowledge/>

"The knowledge argument is one of the main challenges to physicalism, the doctrine that the world is entirely physical."

<https://iep.utm.edu/know-arg/>

"In philosophy of mind, Mary's Room is a thought experiment meant to demonstrate the non-physical nature of mental states. It is an example meant to highlight the knowledge argument

against physicalism."

<http://www.philosophy-index.com/jackson/marys-room/>

"What has become known as Mary's Room is an allegory devised by Frank Jackson to represent the Knowledge Argument against physicalism."

[http://www.philosopher.eu/others-writin ... arys-room/](http://www.philosopher.eu/others-writin...arys-room/)

"The knowledge argument (also known as Mary's room or Mary the super-scientist) is a philosophical thought experiment proposed by Frank Jackson in his article "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (1982) and extended in "What Mary Didn't Know" (1986). The experiment is intended to argue against physicalism—the view that the universe, including all that is mental, is entirely physical."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_argument

CHAPTER 2.354.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 3:45 PM



2.353. by Terrapin Station

2.352. by Sculptor1

Qualia are physical. The thought experiment does not address that in any sense. Nor was it designed to.

"The knowledge argument aims to establish that conscious experience involves non-physical properties."

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_argument

Okay. I take back "nor was it designed to".

I do not care who first thought the experiment, nor is it necessary

I do not see how this points to a non physical element.

|What it points to is the simple fact that is obvious. Sensory experience cannot be fully described by EXTERNAL evidence. This does not point to any thing non-physical in any sense.

As your first article points out.

It rests on the idea that someone who has complete physical knowledge about another conscious being might yet lack knowledge about how it feels to have the experiences of that being.

This is about the derivation of "knowledge" concerning the physical experience of physical phenomena.

You have to know what a burn feels like, or the taste of an orange, to "know" what it feels like.

Where does the incorporeal enter the discussion?

CHAPTER 2.355.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 3:56 PM

2.353. by Terrapin Station

2.352. by Sculptor1

Qualia are physical. The thought experiment does not address that in any sense. Nor was it designed to.

"The knowledge argument aims to establish that conscious experience involves non-physical properties."

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-knowledge/>

"The knowledge argument is one of the main challenges to physicalism, the doctrine that the world is entirely physical."

<https://iep.utm.edu/know-arg/>

Etc.

Whether qualia are "physical" depends upon how you define that word.

If "physical" means "tangible, detectable by the senses, having a particular spatio-temporal location," then qualia are not physical.

If "physical" means "consistent with, analyzable via and predictable from the laws of physics," then qualia are not physical either.

But if you add "or produced by such systems or entities" to the second definition, then qualia are physical.

Qualia are products of, and only of (as far as we know) physical systems. That gives us some justification for considering them "physical" effects. We may even, at some point, be able to predict, in detail, just what kinds of systems produce those effects. But we will not be able to predict just how those effects will be experienced by the conscious entity that reports them (and, yes, any system that experiences those effects will be a "conscious system").

Mary will not know what red "looks like" to her until she sees something reflecting those wavelengths. She cannot predict that from the laws of physics, nor can anyone describe that to her. But it is presumptuous, and indicative of a mistaken ontology, to suppose those facts entail dualism.

CHAPTER 2.356.

~

GE Morton on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 4:00 PM

2.355. by GE Morton

Mary will not know what red "looks like" to her until she sees something reflecting those wavelengths. She cannot predict that from the laws of physics, nor can anyone describe that to her. But it is presumptuous, and indicative of a mistaken ontology, to suppose those facts entail dualism.

Moreover, if those facts don't entail dualism then there is no need for flailing attempts to establish "identity" between mental events and brain states.

CHAPTER 2.357.

~

Atla on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 5:17 PM

2.347. by GE Morton

2.332. by Atla

Luckily, free thinkers don't have to be as inept as Kant and his followers.

There is no fundamental divide between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world.

You might explain how you understand the term "fundamental" (which term you also use problematically in the quote below). You probably also don't understand what the "noumenal" world is (it is not the external, physical world described by science).

The term "fundamental" is usually meant to denote something irreducible to anything simpler. But the phenomenal world is not reducible to the noumenal "world," even in principle --- because we have no knowledge whatsoever of that "world" ("realm" is a better term for the noumena; "world" has misleading connotations). Hence we can't derive any phenomena we might experience from it, or equate them with it.

Meaning that the phenomenal world is a model of the external noumenal world, and also one with it (continuous with it), at the same time.

That is incoherent. If it is distinguishable from it then it cannot be "at one with it at the same time." Nor can we say that it is "continuous" with the noumenal realm, since we don't know the extent of that realm. And, again, you seem to be confusing the "noumenal world" with the external, physical world described by science. You might try reading Kant more carefully.

The phenomenal world is already direct experience, it's a bit of the 'absolute reality'.

Yes, the phenomenal world is the world we perceive, experience. The noumenal realm is a realm of existence we hypothesize to exist to explain, supply a cause for, our percepts and other experiences --- no cause for them, or even for our very existence, being apparent within experience.

2.338. by Atla

As for the Hard problem, you have to turn it inside out to 'resolve' it. They always try to figure out how experience arises from something as fundamental as physical stuff. But it's experience that's fundamental, and the idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience.

Yes, experience is fundamental (as above defined), but it still requires an explanation --- some cause for it. Else we are trapped in solipsism. But you make a sound point with, "idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience." "Physical stuff" is indeed itself a conceptual construct. So we're trying to use mental constructs to explain themselves. Not a promising endeavor.

BTW, I myself used the term "conceptual model" in a misleading way in the quote above. A "conceptual model" is one consciously, deliberately constructed by us. The world described by science is a conceptual model. The model I described earlier is not a conceptual model; it is created subconsciously by our brains, becoming coherent in the first few months of life, and presented to us automatically. It becomes the world as we know it. Perhaps we can call it a "cognitive model."

Also, the term "qualia" is used by most (though perhaps not all) to refer only to the distinctive, singular sensations elicited by sensory inputs, which allow us to distinguish among them (colors, odors, flavors,

sounds, etc.). Other mental phenomena, such as thoughts, knowledge, ideas, memories, etc., while raising many of the same issues as qualia, are not qualia.

Physical stuff is simply a cognitive overlay, a map consisting of 'things', like protons and fields. We use this map to talk about the terrain. But the terrain is actually void of 'things', 'thing'-ness is a feature of human thinking.

Well, your "terrain" there sounds much like Kant's noumenon. But we can't say anything about that "terrain," not even that it is "devoid of things."

Imo physical stuff is maybe best thought of as a structural description of the world. But a structural description of the world is not the world itself, that's why the Hard problem is kinda silly. Also, that's why it's insufficient to simply say that the spatio-temporal coordinates are different, when trying to solve the Hard problem.

The Hard Problem is hard when addressing it scientifically, because scientific methods presuppose, and were developed to investigate, objective, public phenomena. But qualia and other mental phenomena are intractably private, and not accessible to empirical methods. They are beyond their reach.

Read again what I wrote. By 'noumenal world', I did mean the hypothetical world inferred from the contents of our experiences.

CHAPTER 2.358.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 5:32 PM

Atla

As for the Hard problem, you have to turn it inside out to 'resolve' it. They always try to figure out how experience arises from something as fundamental as physical stuff. But it's experience that's fundamental, and the idea of physical stuff occurs within it. Our idea of physical stuff is also a qualia, an experience.

Right, if experience is fundamental, how it is explained ends there.

Physical stuff is simply a cognitive overlay, a map consisting of 'things', like protons and fields. We use this map to talk about the terrain. But the terrain is actually void of 'things', 'thing'-ness is a feature of human thinking.

Imo physical stuff is maybe best thought of as a structural description of the world. But a structural description of the world is not the world itself, that's why the Hard problem is kinda silly. Also, that's why it's insufficient to simply say that the spatio-temporal coordinates are different, when trying to solve the Hard problem.

I agree that gets us out of the Hard Problem as we talk about it, and is a coherent hypothesis.

The problem I think it presents, is that everything we claim to be able to know inter-subjectively (which gets us out of solipsism), is rooted in treating the physical map as the territory. The model of the material world (which we know is at best flawed and limited) is the context where we can meet and talk and compare notes about what it's like to see a red apple and so on.

And I don't see a route to being able to know if the explanation that all that exists is this 'field of experience' (as I imagine it) is correct? Maybe IIT can discover the mathematical dimension where it exists, or QM come up with something... I don't think meditation or self-reflection is reliable evidence that only experience exists, because those can always (I think) be correlated with brain states - if some experiential state definitively can't, then that's whole new ball game.

It's the same old prob imo - how can we know?

Not sure what you mean. It's impossible to get behind the appearances and 'prove' any worldview. Nondualism is simply the only available hypothetical worldview that consistently explains everything, and is also the Occam's razor's choice.

CHAPTER 2.359.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 5:46 PM



2.354. by Sculptor1

It rests on the idea that someone who has complete physical knowledge about another conscious being might yet lack knowledge about how it feels to have the experiences of that being.

This is about the derivation of "knowledge" concerning the physical experience of physical phenomena.

You have to know what a burn feels like, or the taste of an orange, to "know" what it feels like.

Where does the incorporeal enter the discussion?

I agree with you that the thought experiment doesn't work, but the reason some people take it to work is that they agree that

(a) you could have COMPLETE physical knowledge of x

yet


(b) not know what x is like in terms of qualia, or experientially

Obviously, for those of us who are arguing that qualia or experience (from a subjective point of view) is physical would say, "Hold on a minute--you *can't* have *complete* physical knowledge of x if you don't know what x is like in terms of qualia or experientially, because that *is* physical knowledge."

The argument winds up being a "preaching to the choir" for folks who believe that qualia/experience isn't physical.

CHAPTER 2.360.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 5:55 PM



2.355. by GE Morton

Whether qualia are "physical" depends upon how you define that word.

If "physical" means "tangible, detectable by the senses, having a particular spatio-temporal location," then qualia are not physical.

If "physical" means "consistent with, analyzable via and predictable from the laws of physics," then qualia are not physical either.

Physical, on my account, as I've probably written at least 20 times or so here over the years refers to materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials. Those three things do not seem to be separable in reality, just conceptually. They all amount to properties, too. Or in other words, properties are just another way of talking about materials, relations and processes.

Qualia are not going to be merely "produced" by physical things, where qualia are not identical to

physical things.

"Physical" in philosophy, is obviously not going to amount to "analyzable via and predictable from the laws of physics *as they're presently instantiated in the science of physics*" because it's not as if we're wondering if qualia is something that's covered or at all near being covered in physics textbooks. We could just look at a physics textbook and check, obviously. Likewise, we're not wondering if anatomy is at all covered or near being covered in physics textbooks, but there's no doubt that anatomy is physical. Furthermore, *one does not need to be a realist on physical laws to be a physicalist.*

And "physical" is obviously not going to refer to some colloquial nonsense of whether we can "touch" something, or see it with our naked eyes, etc.

CHAPTER 2.361.

~

Sculptor1 on  Friday, September 18, 2020 at 6:28 PM



2.359. by Terrapin Station

2.354. by Sculptor1

It rests on the idea that someone who has complete physical knowledge about another conscious being might yet lack knowledge about how it feels to have the experiences of that being.

This is about the derivation of "knowledge" concerning the physical experience of physical phenomena.

You have to know what a burn feels like, or the taste of an orange, to "know" what it feels like.

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Obviously, for those of us who are arguing that qualia or experience (from a subjective point of view) is physical would say, "Hold on a minute--you can't have complete physical knowledge of x if you don't know what x is like in terms of qualia or experientially, because that is physical knowledge."

The argument winds up being a "preaching to the choir" for folks who believe that qualia/experience isn't physical.

I think what is missed is that feelings are incomplete without physicality so why would it ever involve the incorporeal.

If full knowledge of experience requires physical interaction then why would it need anything else. A blind man is never going to be able to imagine sight, and a "soul" aint gonna help

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 7:20 PM

GE

In one of her recent posts on this subject Gertie wrote, "To me the two most obvious ways of accounting for phenomenal experience is that it's somehow reducible to fundamental material stuff, or it's fundamental itself."

That leads her to consider panpsychism. I think the insistence on mind/brain identity is motivated by the same dilemma --- either mental phenomena are reducible to physical phenomena, or we're forced to dualism (of which panpsychism is one offshoot). Identity seems a way to escape that dilemma.

We need to get "outside that box" and rethink the issue afresh, beginning with 4 postulates:

1. Mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, though there is a causal relation between them.

To take the steam train analogy. If you're suggesting here that because a train produces steam, that steam isn't reducible to what the stuff of the train is doing, then you're suggesting steam is a fundamentally different type of stuff. Likewise brains and mental experience.

Or if you're suggesting brains and mental experience are made of the same type of material stuff, then you face the Hard Problem.

Your hypothesis that mental experience is *generated by* brain processes, rather than *is* brain processes doesn't escape this dilemma as far as I can see.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 8:34 PM

GE

I'm running out of steam on this.

So the fact that we humans create a model of the world which includes a model of our self within it, has no apparent bearing on how experience arises. Far less complex experiencing animals probably don't create such a model. It doesn't look like a necessary condition for mental experience. And if it's not, copying the creation of that 'model maker within the model' function won't make any difference to whether an AI can experience.

Well, sure it has a bearing. I think there is pretty widespread agreement among modern philosophers (hardcore naive realists excepted) that the phenomenal world, the world we experience, is a conceptual model of a hypothetical external, "noumenal" world which we can never experience directly. That experienced world is constructed of impressions --- sensations, concepts, feelings, etc. --- that are intangible, subjective, and intrinsically private, but which somehow represent, and are elicited by, states of affairs in that presumed external world (which includes one's --- presumed --- physical body). Hence a creature which can create such a model will be conscious, by definition.

And I disagree that "less complex animals don't create such a model." I think we should assume that any animal with a nervous system complex enough to support one does create such a model. Amoebae? No. Vertebrates and even some insects? Yes --- probably. Honeybees' brains consist of about 1 million neurons --- more than enough to construct at least a rough conceptual model of their environment. And they exhibit behaviors and capabilities that not long ago were thought to be restricted to primates.

Read back, you've missed my original point. I'll repeat it. There's nothing special about a model **which includes the model maker** which is likely to be a necessary condition for experience. There's no reason to think an AI copying that model-maker-within-the-model feature will help enable it to experience.

Yeah could be. It leaves you with the problem of not knowing if AI is the right type of wire. Well, that is the central issue here --- how will we ever know, other than by observing the system's behavior? Do you really want a theory that leaves that question permanently open --- that is empirically unconfirmable and unfalsifiable?

A question which isn't answered is an open question. A theory which empirically unconfirmable and unfalsifiable is called a hypothesis, it's necessarily speculative. It's a What If. Do you really want to pretend it isn't?

*Maybe. But to assume the observable behaviour resulting from biological stuff and processes is less likely to be coincidental/superficial than the biological stuff and processes itself would be ****-backwards imo.*

Well, that is not what I'm suggesting. I think that biological stuff, of a certain kind and arranged in certain ways, will produce consciousness. But also that non-biological stuff, or non-natural biological stuff will also produce consciousness, when arranged in analogous ways.

Maybe.

And again, the only means we have, or will ever have (given what we do know about the problem) for deciding whether the biology is critical is by observing the system's behavior. You seem to be holding out for some future "transcendental" insight into this issue. But for now, and for the foreseeable future, behavior is all we have.

Just don't say behavioural tests are reliable.

*Pragmatically perhaps, but that doesn't make it reliable.
What would?*

A Theory of Consciousness which explained the necessary and sufficient conditions, which we could then test for.

Look at this way – why do we assume other humans have experiences like us?

– They are physically almost identical, and brain scans show similar responses to similar stimuli, which match similar verbal reports to ours.

– Their observable behaviour is experientially understandable to us, in that we can imagine behaving similarly in similar circumstances.

It's all about similarity. That's why the hope is that if we create an AI sufficiently similar to a human, it will somehow capture the necessary and sufficient conditions for experience.

As pointed out before, your first similarity there is insufficient, and may be irrelevant.

It might be insufficient and irrelevant, **you don't know.**

The brain-dead person is also physically similar to us, but not conscious --- a judgment we make based on the lack of conscious behavior.

We make that judgement because experience as we embodied humans experience it is obviously dynamic, changing moment to moment. Like a steam train in motion, not like a bee which makes honey then goes off again about its bee business. The brain stops working when we die, all those biological electrochemical processes cease. The point is AI don't have the same biological electrochemical processes.

And we can correlate brain scan information with perceptual phenomena only if it results in observable behavior. That is the only means we have of knowing --- inferring --- what perceptual phenomena is occurring (in anyone other than ourselves).

And our self reports. What scans confirm is that some types of specific biological, electro-chemical activity correlate to consistent self-reports of specific types of experience by biological humans. We then reasonably assume that certain types of biological electrochemical interactions possess the necessary and sufficient conditions for experience.

*Not stubbornness. Just because it's the best we can do doesn't mean it's reliable. We might be forced to act as if it's reliable, but we should realise that's what we're doing.
Still holding out for that transcendental insight, eh?*

Not my point. My point, which I'm repeating over and over now, is that **just because observed behaviour is the only available way of testing AI, doesn't mean it's reliable. Because we don't know if the AI's substrate will capture the nec and sufficient conditions.**

Anyway, I'm done with just repeating this same obvious point.

Why is it so hard to just say you don't know - nobody does?

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 10:06 PM

2.360. by Terrapin Station

Physical, on my account, as I've probably written at least 20 times or so here over the years refers to materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials. Those three things do not seem to be separable in reality, just conceptually. They all amount to properties, too. Or in other words, properties are just another way of talking about materials, relations and processes.

Circular and uninformative. "Material" is merely a synonym for "physical," "material thing" for "physical thing."

As I've suggested before, you need to abandon these hokey, spurious definitions of common terms and stick with the dictionary:

Physical (adjective):

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature."

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physical>

Qualia are not going to be merely "produced" by physical things, where qualia are not identical to physical things.

Oh? Why not? Are you suggesting that X cannot produce Y unless X and Y are identical? Is cotton fabric identical to the textile mill that produced it? A musical note identical to the flute that produced it? And, of course, physical things produce all manner of non-physical things. Humans (physical things) produce non-physical ideas, laws, theories, religions, moralities, etc. Hurricanes (physical things) produce worry, fear, grief. The world is full of non-physical things produced by physical things.

"Physical" in philosophy, is obviously not going to amount to "analyzable via and predictable from the laws of physics as they're presently instantiated in the science of physics" . . .

Well, that depends upon whose philosophy you have in mind.

. . . because it's not as if we're wondering if qualia is something that's covered or at all near being covered in physics textbooks.

It is not covered in physics textbooks because physicists don't consider qualia to fall within their purview. Neither do most philosophers. To make qualia "physical" you either need some hokey

definition of "physical" or to claim they are "identical" with something physical, per some hokey definition of "identical."

CHAPTER 2.365.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, September 18, 2020 at 11:32 PM

2.363. by Gertie

GE

I'm running out of steam on this.

Well, we both seem to think the other is missing, or misunderstanding, the other's points and hence not addressing them.

Mine is this: Behavior is the only criterion we have, or will ever have, for determining whether a system other than ourselves is conscious. That is because the "stuff" of consciousness, thoughts, ideas, qualia, desires, moods, even dreams, are necessarily and impenetrably private, inaccessible to any third-party observer. I'll try to make that case by going through the other points in your comment:

Read back, you've missed my original point. I'll repeat it. There's nothing special about a model which includes the model maker which is likely to be a necessary condition for experience. There's no reason to think an AI copying that model-maker-within-the-model feature will help enable it to experience.

We can have no idea whether any particular property of a system is "special," in the sense of being necessary for consciousness, unless we construct a system with a candidate property and *observe its behavior*. If an AI's behavior, over as wide a variety of situations you wish to observe, is indistinguishable from that of humans (in relevant ways) in similar situations, then that certainly is evidence that it is conscious, whether it is "copying" human behavior or not. It is the only kind of evidence we'll ever have.

A question which isn't answered is an open question. A theory which empirically unconfirmable and unfalsifiable is called a hypothesis, it's necessarily speculative. It's a What If. Do you really want to pretend it isn't?

Not correct re: hypothesis. An hypothesis is a cognitive proposition whose truth value is unknown, but can be determined by experiment ("hypothesis testing"). Theories are not hypotheses; they are neither true nor false, but sound or unsound --- they either generate testable propositions and predictions, or they don't. A theory which yields no testable propositions, is unconfirmable or unfalsifiable, is unsound; vacuous. A theory which suggests that things or systems whose behavior is not indicative of consciousness may nonetheless be conscious is vacuous, since there is no other way, in principle, to confirm/disconfirm such a claim.

Just don't say behavioural tests are reliable.

They are sometimes not reliable in the short run (e.g., a wide-awake person may be feigning sleep, or unconsciousness). But they are quite reliable over an extended period of observation. But speaking strictly, we can't even assess their reliability, because we can only assess the reliability of some chosen method by comparing it with another method --- and we have no other method. That makes behavior the *decisive* criterion for consciousness.

What would?

A Theory of Consciousness which explained the necessary and sufficient conditions, which we could then test for.

We have no means of knowing what conditions are necessary or sufficient, i.e., whether that theory is sound, other than by implementing those conditions and observing the resulting behavior.

The brain stops working when we die, all those biological electrochemical processes cease. The point is AI don't have the same biological electrochemical processes.

Yes, some functioning, physical substrate is necessary for consciousness (per all of the evidence we have). But whether that particular substrate is necessary can only be determined by experimenting with other substrates and observing the system's behavior. If that behavior is unquestionably affirmative for consciousness, then there is no room for further doubt about whether the system is "really" conscious. "Really" has no meaning there; it refers to nothing testable or observable.

And our self reports. What scans confirm is that some types of specific biological, electro-chemical activity correlate to consistent self-reports of specific types of experience by biological humans. We then reasonably assume that certain types of biological electrochemical interactions possess the necessary and sufficient conditions for experience.

Of course they do. But that is not to say that is the only type of system which can implement those conditions. Also, keep in mind that self-reports are themselves behaviors.

Not my point. My point, which I'm repeating over and over now, is that just because observed behaviour is the only available way of testing AI, doesn't mean it's reliable. Because we don't know if the AI's substrate will capture the nec and sufficient conditions.

If behavior is deemed an unreliable indicator of consciousness then we can never know whether any system, including other humans, are "really" conscious, or what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for it (this is, of course, the topic of the voluminous "zombie" literature). That is because phenomenal experience is intractably private, and forever inaccessible to third party observers.

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 6 6 .

~

Terrapin Station wrote: Physical, on my account, as I've probably written at least 20 times or so here over the years refers to materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials. Those three things do not seem to be separable in reality, just conceptually. They all amount to properties, too. Or in other words, properties are just another way of talking about materials, relations and processes.

Simply saying "physical = material" doesn't advance the cause of providing a useful definition of "physical". It just makes it a task of providing a useful definition of "material".

"Physical" in philosophy, is obviously not going to amount to "analyzable via and predictable from the laws of physics as they're presently instantiated in the science of physics" because it's not as if we're wondering if qualia is something that's covered or at all near being covered in physics textbooks. We could just look at a physics textbook and check, obviously. Likewise, we're not wondering if anatomy is at all covered or near being covered in physics textbooks, but there's no doubt that anatomy is physical. Furthermore, one does not need to be a realist on physical laws to be a physicalist.

I don't think many people would suggest that "physical" means "relating to physics as it currently happens to be". As I've said a few times myself, I think the only useful (as opposed to empty/circular) definition of "physical" is something like "the things we propose to be the common causes of, or patterns in, diverse potential and actual sensations.". Since physics is a fundamentally empirical subject, I think a reasonable shorthand is therefore to say that "physical" means "the kinds of things that physics studies".

And "physical" is obviously not going to refer to some colloquial nonsense of whether we can "touch" something, or see it with our naked eyes, etc.

Talk about whether something can potentially be touched or seen, in defining "physical" informally, is not a bad route to take in my view.

GE Morton wrote: Circular and uninformative. "Material" is merely a synonym for "physical," "material thing" for "physical thing."

As I've suggested before, you need to abandon these hokey, spurious definitions of common terms and stick with the dictionary:

Physical (adjective):

"1a: of or relating to natural science

b(1): of or relating to physics

(2): characterized or produced by the forces and operations of physics

2a: having material existence : perceptible especially through the senses and subject to the laws of nature."

On this point, I agree.

CHAPTER 2.367.

~

2.330. by Atla



2.327. by Pattern-chaser

I just followed that link, and Malwarebytes said "Website blocked due to reputation". I decided not to proceed, but posted this because I thought we should be aware of a possible problem?

Don't know what you did, here it says the site is clean according to 66 out of 66 engines.

<https://www.virustotal.com/gui/url/d6fc.../detection>

That's good to hear.

My bank - would you believe it? - arranged a free subscription for its customers to Malwarebytes Premium, so I took them up on it. I was stunned! A bank doing something useful for its customers! Anyway, **Malwarebytes** has been around forever, and has a sound reputation based on performance and use. So when it advised me to avoid that website, I did. It's good to hear this is probably a false positive.

CHAPTER 2.368.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 19, 2020 at 11:49 AM



2.364. by GE Morton

Circular and uninformative.

Can you give me an example of a definition that's not circular?

CHAPTER 2.369.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 19, 2020 at 11:54 AM



2.366. by Steve3007

Terrapin Station wrote:Physical, on my account, as I've probably written at least 20 times or so here over the years refers to materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials. Those three things do not seem to be separable in reality, just conceptually. They all amount to properties, too. Or in other words, properties are just another way of talking about materials, relations and processes.

Simply saying "physical = material"

I would have pointed this out to General Electric Morton above, too, but I don't want to give him anything else that might distract him.

First, I didn't say that physical = material (period), did I? I mean, you're quoting what I said right there. It doesn't stop with the word "material(s)."

Aside from that, is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to? If we're dealing with such a person, who would have to be a very odd person, maybe from another planet or some kind of robot or something, then we'd need to proceed by trying to figure out some terms that they *do* have a grasp on, because otherwise we might exhaust hundreds where the person would say, "I have no idea what that is, either." That could be endless if they're odd enough.

I didn't think the idea was supposed to be that we were supposed to bootstrap, or pretend to bootstrap, someone who has no idea of what any term at all might refer to.

CHAPTER 2.370.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, September 19, 2020 at 6:48 PM



2.346. *by evolution*

2.324. *by Terrapin Station*

But I just did: Just answer in relation to whatever analysis of propositional knowledge you personally use--whoever you agree with, let's say.

I do NOT have an analysis of propositional knowledge that I personally use.

It's it not something you're interested in? You're not (philosophically) curious what propositional knowledge is?

CHAPTER 2.371.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 3:49 AM

1. *Mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, though there is a causal relation between them.*
2. *Mental phenomena are not identical with physical phenomena.*
3. *Dualism is false, i.e., there is no "mental" (or "spiritual," "non-physical,") substance, or "stuff," of which qualia and other mental phenomena are constituted.*
4. *Though mental phenomena are not reducible to or derivable from the laws of physics, those laws are adequate to explain them to the extent they are explicable.*

My concern is that the 4 are not obviously compatible. If we accept 1 and 2, the physical causes the mental but is not identical to it then what is it you have caused? Are we not forced into dualism?

The assumption that we are so forced rests on another assumption, namely, that whatever exists is, or is constituted from, some sort of "substance," and therefore that if X is not a substance of a given type, then it must be or be constituted from a substance of another type. But many more things exist than can be fairly characterized as substances.

The concept of substance has been around since the inception of philosophy, a matter of central concern since the extensive discussions of the subject by Aristotle. There is nothing like a consensus on what "substance" is, on how that term should be understood. In addition to the several analytical definitions that have been suggested, the term also has many connotations, which come to the fore in different contexts.

The Stanford Encyclopedia has an extensive review article on the topic:

[https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/subs ... onstructed](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/subs...onstructed).

The author lists several features, or qualities, that various philosophers have taken to be descriptive, if not definitive, of "substance:"

- i. being ontologically basic—substances are the things from which everything else is made or by which it is metaphysically sustained;
- ii. being, at least compared to other things, relatively independent and durable, and, perhaps, absolutely so;
- iii. being the paradigm subjects of predication and bearers of properties;
- iv. being, at least for the more ordinary kinds of substance, the subjects of change;
- v. being typified by those things we normally classify as objects, or kinds of objects;
- vi. being typified by kinds of stuff.
- vii. (Kant) those enduring particulars that give unity to our spatio-temporal framework, and the individuation and re-identification of which enables us to locate ourselves in that framework.

The first three are probably the most widely shared, and closest to what the "common man" understands by the word, especially # iii. That conception is embodied in the usual way we speak about things, via declarative sentences in which we attribute a predicate, denoting some property, to a subject. The subject "thing" is substance, or composed of some more fundamental substance,

and the properties --- universals --- though they exist, are not substances (nominalists deny the existence of universals altogether).

So everything consists of some sort of substance, to which some sorts of properties attach. Different sets of properties may apply to substances of different categories (so that trying to apply a property to substance of the wrong type for that category of properties is a "category mistake").

But this entire ontology of substances which take on properties is derived from contemplation of *public things*, and serves us more-or-less well for that purpose. But it has no room for existents that are neither substances nor universals --- such as qualia. So we try to force them into that framework.

I think the evidence is consistent with identity, (depending on your criteria for identity as per), and this is simpler, one mystery, rather than two (i.e. what is this separate mentality as well as how is it caused).

Yes, it simplifies things. Unfortunately, the two things in question are not identical per the ordinary criteria for declaring two things to be identical.

Point 4., that mentality is not derivable from the laws of physics though these laws are adequate to explain it is interesting but needs unpacking. Could we argue that a frog is not directly derivable from the laws of physics but physics can explain a frog in the context of evolution?

A frog is *derivable* from the laws of physics, but not predictable by them. Qualia are predictable by the laws of physics (per the cognitive model theory), but not derivable from them.

No, if qualia are not physical we are not forced into dualism. What they force us to do is re-examine our ontological assumptions.

CHAPTER 2.372.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 5:35 AM

2.371. by GE Morton

2.323. by Wosname

My concern is that the 4 are not obviously compatible. If we accept 1 and 2, the physical causes the mental but is not identical to it then what is it you have caused? Are we not forced into dualism?

The assumption that we are so forced rests on another assumption, namely, that whatever exists is, or is constituted from, some sort of "substance," and therefore that if X is not a substance of a given type, then it must be or be constituted from a substance of another type. But many more things exist than can be fairly characterized as substances.

The concept of substance has been around since the inception of philosophy, a matter of central concern since the extensive discussions of the subject by Aristotle. There is nothing like a consensus on what "substance" is, on how that term should be understood. In addition to the several analytical definitions that have been suggested, the term also has many connotations, which come to the fore in different contexts.

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The author lists several features, or qualities, that various philosophers have taken to be descriptive, if not definitive, of "substance:"

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- ii. being, at least compared to other things, relatively independent and durable, and, perhaps, absolutely so;*
- iii. being the paradigm subjects of predication and bearers of properties;*
- iv. being, at least for the more ordinary kinds of substance, the subjects of change;*
- v. being typified by those things we normally classify as objects, or kinds of objects;*
- vi. being typified by kinds of stuff.*
- vii. (Kant) those enduring particulars that give unity to our spatio-temporal framework, and the individuation and re-identification of which enables us to locate ourselves in that framework.*

The first three are probably the most widely shared, and closest to what the "common man" understands by the word, especially # iii. That conception is embodied in the usual way we speak about things, via declarative sentences in which we attribute a predicate, denoting some property, to a subject. The subject "thing" is substance, or composed of some more fundamental substance, and the properties --- universals --- though they exist, are not substances (nominalists deny the existence of universals altogether).

So everything consists of some sort of substance, to which some sorts of properties attach. Different sets of properties may apply to substances of different categories (so that trying to apply a property to substance of the wrong type for that category of properties is a "category mistake").

But this entire ontology of substances which take on properties is derived from contemplation of public things, and serves us more-or-less well for that purpose. But it has no room for existents that are neither substances nor universals --- such as qualia. So we try to force them into that framework.

I think the evidence is consistent with identity, (depending on your criteria for identity as per), and this is simpler, one mystery, rather than two (i.e. what is this separate mentality as well as how is it caused).

Yes, it simplifies things. Unfortunately, the two things in question are not identical per the ordinary criteria for declaring two things to be identical.

Point 4., that mentality is not derivable from the laws of physics though these laws are adequate to explain it is interesting but needs unpacking. Could we argue that a frog is not directly derivable from the laws of physics but physics can explain a frog in the context of evolution?

A frog is derivable from the laws of physics, but not predictable by them. Qualia are predictable by the laws of physics (per the cognitive model theory), but not derivable from them.

No, if qualia are not physical we are not forced into dualism. What they force us to do is re-examine our ontological assumptions.

So your 'ephemeral qualia' can't be detected so far, and its causal relation to physical stuff can't be explained either. Its identity with physical stuff is rejected, because of semantics about 'identity', even though all the known correlations point towards their identity. Yet somehow, none of this is supposed to be a 'physical stuff - qualia' dualism either, because of substance theory, which isn't even the issue here.

CHAPTER 2.373.

~

evolution on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 10:44 AM

2.370. by Terrapin Station

2.346. by evolution

*I do NOT have an analysis of propositional knowledge that I personally use.
It's it not something you're interested in?*

Once again, you pose a statement, and again about me, but add a question mark at the end of your statement.

2.370. by Terrapin Station

You're not (philosophically) curious what propositional knowledge is?

And again, ANOTHER proposed statement, with ANOTHER question mark at the end of it.

If I recall correctly, I have ALREADY asked you what is 'propositional knowledge', to you? But you do have a tendency to NOT clarify or NOT answer the actual questions, which I pose to you.



Wosname on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 11:02 AM

2.371. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 4:49 am

But this entire ontology of substances which take on properties is derived from contemplation of public things, and serves us more-or-less well for that purpose. But it has no room for existents that are neither substances nor universals --- such as qualia. So we try to force them into that framework. I think the evidence is consistent with identity, (depending on your criteria for identity as per), and this is simpler, one mystery, rather than two (i.e. what is this separate mentality as well as how is it caused).

Yes, it simplifies things. Unfortunately, the two things in question are not identical per the ordinary criteria for declaring two things to be identical.

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No, if qualia are not physical we are not forced into dualism. What they force us to do is re-examine our ontological assumptions.

Not sure about this GEM.

If we have physical and non-physical events we seem to have two sorts of events and that is dualism as I understand it. And the problem has always been to marry these two things back together once you have separated them.

The cognitive model you suggest seems to avoid the problem of how they interact by suggesting that they are somehow both the same thing *and* a different thing, and I am struggling to understand you. I am in a muddle with the view that there is this second thing, mentality, separate from the physical yet able to interact with it, something new and different (since it is not physical but caused by physical processes, and if I have you, can also cause them), but still it should not be considered new and different? It sounds quite close to identity theory but I clearly haven't got it, and I accept it may be my fault. I do agree that the normal criteria for identity don't work once we introduce both a public and private perspective.

I think of the perception of qualia as a physical event. We can identify physical events and brain processing associated with seeing red say. You seem to be suggesting that the perception of qualia is not a physical event and not a non-physical event either? And you say I would understand this if I just re-examined my ontological assumptions? Identity theory, the notion that physical things can be mental things is hard enough. It is the Hard Problem that Gertie rightly points to and a mystery. And it is what I think your ontological reframing is seeking to crack. But I am not clear how you have cracked it. I need help from you to make sense of this reframing, because at the

moment I still prefer to stick with a problem of perspective than a problem of ontology, mainly because I can't grasp this reframing that you are proposing.

If it helps, my reasoning is that either complex physical processes may be able to produce a new thing that is non-physical (mentality) or that physical processes can also be mental ones. We don't know how this is possible either way, the first is dualism, the second identity theory, but dualism faces the additional problem of getting the two separate things to interact, so I prefer identity. (If I understand you Atla, and I may not, so do shout Atla, your view is that consciousness is pervasive in all matter and not just in matter of sufficient complex organisation). You are seeking, I think GEM, a third option, something that is neither dualism nor identity, (we have ignored idealism from shared prejudice perhaps). I am not unwilling to re-examine my ontological assumptions, and I have tried, but I haven't grasped your reframing yet.

CHAPTER 2.375.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 11:51 AM



2.373. by evolution

Once again, you pose a statement, and again about me, but add a question mark at the end of your statement.

Aside from the typo, it was a question. Here it is without the typo:

Is it not something you're interested in? You're not (philosophically) curious what propositional knowledge is?

Can you answer those questions? I'll answer yours after we're through with this part. Tit for tat.

CHAPTER 2.376.

~

Gertie on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 12:17 PM

GE

I'm just going to agree to differ on the AI and testing stuff unless there's something you think I haven't addressed.

More interesting to me is this -

1. Mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, though there is a causal relation between them.

How do you account for this?

If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that?

CHAPTER 2.377.

~

Faustus5 on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 1:40 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.376. by Gertie

If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that?

I think GE is adhering to a very strict definition of what "reductionism" requires, given his favorable response to the definition I supplied a week or two ago in this thread. I too deny that mental states can be reduced to physical states for the same reason, but do not think of mental states as something different than brain states.

CHAPTER 2.378.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 2:23 PM



2.377. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.376. by Gertie

*If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that?
I think GE is adhering to a very strict definition of what "reductionism" requires, given his favorable response to the definition I supplied a week or two ago in this thread. I too deny that mental states can be reduced to physical states for the same reason, but do not think of mental states as something different than brain states.*

What post was that (the definition of reductionism)? I usually don't read every post in long threads like this, especially not when the posts are long. (Contrary to appearances, I actually don't spend that much time on the board normally--I'm usually not here much longer than it takes to read replies to me, and occasionally bits of other responses, and then the couple minutes it takes me to quickly respond, complete with lots of typos 😊 .)



GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 2:38 PM

2.372. by Atla

So your 'ephemeral qualia' can't be detected so far . . .

Huh? Of course they can be detected. Do you not experience them? YOU can detect your qualia, but your qualia can't be detected by third parties.

. . .and its causal relation to physical stuff can't be explained either.

Yes, it can be explained functionally --- we can (probably, eventually) set forth the physical conditions which produce consciousness (and therefore qualia). But the contents of consciousness can't be explained reductively (Mary can't deduce from her vast and thorough understanding of physics what sensation she will experience when first seeing something red).

Its identity with physical stuff is rejected, because of semantics about 'identity', even though all the known correlations point towards their identity.

Correlations between two things or phenomena don't establish identity between them. Hearts and lungs are strongly correlated --- all mammals have both --- but hearts are not identical with lungs.

Yet somehow, none of this is supposed to be a 'physical stuff - qualia' dualism either, because of substance theory, which isn't even the issue here.

Well, yes, it is the issue. Dualism doesn't merely postulate the existence of non-physical things -- -- there are millions of those --- but of two distinct *substances*. But qualia are not substances; neither are they properties of substances. The ontology of substances and universals is inapplicable to mental phenomena and thus unable to explain them.

And, yes, qualia are "physical" if we understand that term to include effects produced by physical systems (which is embraced by one of the dictionary definitions of "physical" I gave earlier). Physical systems can produce non-physical effects, in the narrow sense of "physical." Those effects can then be called "physical" in the broader sense.



GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 3:10 PM

2.376. by Gertie

If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that?

Why do you assume it is "acting on something else"? Cause-and-effect doesn't entail, or presume, that an effect be an action on something else. Effects are not actions; they are results of actions. Qualia are an effect produced in the brain when it receives certain sensory signals.

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 8 1 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 3:15 PM

2.379. by GE Morton

Huh? Of course they can be detected. Do you not experience them? YOU can detect your qualia, but your qualia can't be detected by third parties.

That's not detection. Maybe there's something extra happening here, maybe not.

Yes, it can be explained functionally --- we can (probably, eventually) set forth the physical conditions which produce consciousness (and therefore qualia). But the contents of consciousness can't be explained reductively (Mary can't deduce from her vast and thorough understanding of physics what sensation she will experience when first seeing something red).

So its casual relation to physical stuff can't be explained either. Maybe it will be explained one day, maybe not.

Correlations between two things or phenomena don't establish identity between them. Hearts and lungs are strongly correlated --- all mammals have both --- but hearts are not identical with lungs.

Correlation doesn't imply identity. But hearts and lungs are two different detectable things, and they don't occur at the same spacetime location either, so there's no parallel.

Well, yes, it is the issue. Dualism doesn't merely postulate the existence of non-physical things --- there are millions of those --- but of two distinct substances. But qualia are not substances; neither are they properties of substances. The ontology of substances and universals is inapplicable to mental phenomena and thus unable to explain them.

Substance dualism postulates two substances. Dualism without substances is still dualism.

And, yes, qualia are "physical" if we understand that term to include effects produced by physical systems (which is embraced by one of the dictionary definitions of "physical" I gave earlier). Physical systems can produce non-physical effects, in the narrow sense of "physical." Those effects can then be called "physical" in the broader sense.

Physical systems can't produce non-physical effects. If you think you found a definition of 'physical' which permits this, then either you misunderstood, or that definition is wrong, unusable in any serious discussion.

What do you hope to get out of this desperate epicycling, I wonder?

CHAPTER 2.382.

~

Faustus5 on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 8:07 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.378. by Terrapin Station

What post was that (the definition of reductionism)? I usually don't read every post in long threads like this, especially not when the posts are long. (Contrary to appearances, I actually don't spend that much time on the board normally--I'm usually not here much longer than it takes to read replies to me, and occasionally bits of other responses, and then the couple minutes it takes me to quickly respond, complete with lots of typos .)


It was back on the 8th, meaning it is ancient history by this point. What I wrote was:

Reductionism is the attempt to reconcile and link two separate vocabularies or language-games which address some phenomenon in the natural world. In sound-bite form, reduction requires that you be able to transform one vocabulary into the other either through some sort of logical deduction or through systematic application of scientific "bridge" laws.

If you cannot do this, then while you can certainly claim (if the evidence supports it) that one vocabulary is talking about the same thing as the other but at a different level of analysis, you cannot claim that one reduces to the other. The two vocabularies have a sort of autonomy from one another.

CHAPTER 2.383.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 8:46 PM



2.382. by [Faustus5 \(Dennett\)](#)

2.378. by [Terrapin Station](#)

What post was that (the definition of reductionism)? I usually don't read every post in long threads like this, especially not when the posts are long. (Contrary to appearances, I actually don't spend that much time on the board normally--I'm usually not here much longer than it takes to read replies to me, and occasionally bits of other responses, and then the couple minutes it takes me to quickly respond, complete with lots of typos 😊 .)

It was back on the 8th, meaning it is ancient history by this point. What I wrote was:

Reductionism is the attempt to reconcile and link two separate vocabularies or language-games which address some phenomenon in the natural world. In sound-bite form, reduction requires that you be able to transform one vocabulary into the other either through some sort of logical deduction or through systematic application of scientific "bridge" laws.

If you cannot do this, then while you can certainly claim (if the evidence supports it) that one vocabulary is talking about the same thing as the other but at a different level of analysis, you cannot claim that one reduces to the other. The two vocabularies have a sort of autonomy from one another.

Ah, thanks. You might know that it's a pet peeve of mine to parse anything as being about or hinging on linguistic conventions aside from literally doing linguistics, philology, etc.

And it seems to me as if it should be obvious that no one is saying that present, conventional *talk* about brains is in any way "transformable" to present, conventional *talk* about mental phenomena--so if we parse "reductionism" that way, then no one is actually suggesting mind/brain reductionism. (Just like if we parse "physicalism" as being about physics per se, it should be obvious that no one is saying that physics textbooks, research programs, etc. address mental phenomena--just like they don't address anatomy, or oil painting conventions, or baseball field maintenance, etc. I mean, all we need to do in that case is crack any arbitrary physics textbook and check if there are chapters on anatomy, oil painting, baseball field maintenance, etc.)

CHAPTER 2.384.

~

[Terrapin Station](#) on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 9:16 PM

Thinking that linguistic conventions are going to tell us anything important about the mind/body relationship is like thinking that clothing/fashion conventions will tell you something important about the geology/flora relationship.



CHAPTER 2.385.

~

[Faustus5](#) on  Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 9:32 PM





2.384. by Terrapin Station

Thinking that linguistic conventions are going to tell us anything important about the mind/body relationship is like thinking that clothing/fashion conventions will tell you something important about the geology/flora relationship.

"Heat is molecular motion" = one of the classic (and rare) examples of actual, workable reductionism.

CHAPTER 2.386.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Monday, September 21, 2020 at 2:19 AM

2.374. by Wosname

If we have physical and non-physical events we seem to have two sorts of events and that is dualism as I understand it. And the problem has always been to marry these two things back together once you have separated them.

Well, if the mere existence of non-physical phenomena implies dualism, then we are all, unavoidably, dualists. The world is rife with such phenomena. I think "dualism" is generally taken to mean that there are two "basic substances" from which all things are composed and to which they can be reduced.

We have to give up the idea that mental phenomena are, or require, some sort of alternative substance and just understand them as effects generated by certain physical systems. Indeed, it wouldn't hurt to give up the concept of "substances," as conceived in ontological theories, entirely. There is no need to try to reduce all existents to some sort of "basic stuff;" all such attempts lead to puzzles, dead-ends, or absurdities. ("Substance" has perfectly good uses in common speech).

The cognitive model you suggest seems to avoid the problem of how they interact by suggesting that they are somehow both the same thing and a different thing, and I am struggling to understand you.

Oh, I'm sure I never said they were the same thing, and hope I didn't suggest it. They are as different as any two things could be.

I am in a muddle with the view that there is this second thing, mentality, separate from the physical yet able to interact with it, something new and different (since it is not physical but caused by physical processes, and if I have you, can also cause them), but still it should not be considered new and different?

Mental phenomena are (obviously) different from physical phenomena, such as brain processes, since they are easily distinguishable from them. But they are not *separate* from them; they are effects of those processes, and would not exist but for those processes (which is the rationale for considering them physical processes in that broader sense). And yes, they can cause physical

effects as well as be caused by them --- a neural signal can generate the quale denoting the presence of ammonia in the air; an intention or desire to type this response can cause my fingers to move. That quale is what informs me of the presence of ammonia, not any knowledge of brain processes. Is some brain process involved in generating that quale? Of course, as there is with the formation of that desire to type. But I'm not aware of those processes when I start typing; I'm only aware of the desire to do so.

I don't think there is anything controversial about any of the above. The controversies begin when we begin thinking that mental phenomena must either be reducible to physical processes, or constitute some alternative, non-physical "substance." But they are *effects* of a physical process, not any sort of "substance." They are neither identical with the mechanisms or processes that produce them, or reducible to them.

The effects of a process are rarely identical with the mechanism or process that produced it. An example I've mentioned before --- the EM field surrounding an operating electric motor is not identical with the motor --- but it is reducible to the operation of that motor. The mind/brain identity theory is a desperation ploy, a straw to grasp to escape the irreducibility problem. What we should be investigating instead are the reasons *why* mental phenomena are not reducible to physical phenomena, even though they are clearly effects of those phenomena.

I think of the perception of qualia as a physical event. We can identify physical events and brain processing associated with seeing red say. You seem to be suggesting that the perception of qualia is not a physical event and not a non-physical event either?

Yes. Because there is a narrow sense of "physical," and a broader sense. Mental phenomena are not physical in the narrow sense, but can be considered physical in the broader sense (whatever is produced by a physical system is itself "physical").

And you say I would understand this if I just re-examined my ontological assumptions? Identity theory, the notion that physical things can be mental things is hard enough. It is the Hard Problem that Gertie rightly points to and a mystery. And it is what I think your ontological reframing is seeking to crack. But I am not clear how you have cracked it.

We will never crack it, if cracking it implies Mary will be able to predict the sensation she will experience when first seeing something red. What we can predict is that she will have one. We can't tell her just what the sensation will "look like" to her, and she can't deduce that from what she knows of physics. We can't characterize it because it will be private to her, just as ours are private to us. There is no way to compare notes. There is no way for science to predict or explain the details of phenomena not open to public inspection and analysis.

CHAPTER 2.387.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 5:58 AM

(To GE Morton, but I'll chip in)

Terrapin Station wrote: Can you give me an example of a definition that's not circular?

Anything that involves pointing at instances of a type of object, or doing something equivalent, and saying "That's what I'm talking about.". That's the way that words are defined in terms of something other than other words. They're defined in terms of the common features among sets of different sensations.

(These parts were to me)

Terrapin Station wrote: First, I didn't say that physical = material (period), did I? I mean, you're quoting what I said right there. It doesn't stop with the word "material(s)."

:roll: . No. You said:

"Physical ... refers to materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials."

I thought it reasonable, for the sake of brevity, to summarize that as:

"Physical = material",

especially as I'd quoted the original for reference and especially as we've already discussed this in other topics. I know you tend not to read the end of long posts so it's best to keep it short. Now I'm having to make it long to explain why I kept it short. Also for the sake of brevity I cut out "...on my account, as I've probably written at least 20 times or so here over the years...". I hope you don't think that misrepresents what you've said too.

Aside from that, is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to?

OK. So our assumption is that the person we're talking to already knows what "material" and "relations of materials" refers to but doesn't yet know what we mean by "physical", so we're telling them. How do they know? By having lived in the world and gathered, and processed, lots of sensual experiences, yes? So in defining "physical" as:

"Materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials."

We're essentially doing what I described at the top of this post. We're defining it in terms of things that have been sensed. Agree so far?

CHAPTER 2.388.

~

2.380. by GE Morton

2.376. by Gertie

If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that? Why do you assume it is "acting on something else"? Cause-and-effect doesn't entail, or presume, that an effect be an action on something else. Effects are not actions; they are results of actions. Qualia are an effect produced in the brain when it receives certain sensory signals.

So you claim physical brain cells causally interacting create a separate thing called experience, which is not reducible to brain activity.

Why isn't it reducible?

How do you explain how that can be?

How do you know?

CHAPTER 2.389.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Monday, September 21, 2020 at 9:42 AM

2.377. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.376. by Gertie

If a brain causally produces something which isn't reducible to the brain, then we'd think it is acting causally on something else which is not part of the brain. But I don't think you're claiming that? I think GE is adhering to a very strict definition of what "reductionism" requires, given his favorable response to the definition I supplied a week or two ago in this thread. I too deny that mental states can be reduced to physical states for the same reason, but do not think of mental states as something different than brain states.

You're a functionalist tho right?

To me that doesn't get to grips with the problem.

CHAPTER 2.390.

~

Wosname on 🕒 Monday, September 21, 2020 at 10:31 AM

2.386. by GE Morton

GE Morton » Today, 3:19 am

The effects of a process are rarely identical with the mechanism or process that produced it. An example I've mentioned before --- the EM field surrounding an operating electric motor is not identical with the motor --- but it is reducible to the operation of that motor.

I think I am getting a better handle on your argument, but I am not sure.

Is this right? We are agreed that explanations are physical. We are agreed that consciousness is associated with brain processes. We are agreed you do not need to be directly aware of your own brain activity to be conscious, (we are conscious of other things, not our brain activity). We agree the Hard Problem remains unsolved.

As to differences: I am suggesting those processes (or some of them) are mentality. So the brain activity associated with seeing red is, in fact, seeing red. You are suggesting, if I have you, that the brain process generates a further physical thing, analogous to an EM field and this is what is seeing red or where we should look to explain seeing red. I am not sure if I have that quite right, and if not let me know how you would describe it.

If mentality is another physical thing, generated by but separate from brain processing, are you hopeful that in time we will be able to detect this physical thing (in the way we can, for example, detect an EM field)? If I have it, I am saying there is no further physical thing to look for, but you are saying there is, we just do not currently know, perhaps, how to look for it? Of course brains do generate EM fields, and are you saying this is where the awareness is perhaps? Consciousness has been moved from the neurons to the EM field generated by the neurons? There are EM field theories of consciousness. I think they are controversial still, but I do not discount them since I lack the understanding to properly evaluate them. The problem of different perspectives remains a problem for establishing identity as discussed. But I am wondering if you think EM field theories may provide us with a potential avenue for agreement, a way perhaps to eventually resolve our debate depending on the findings of future research?

CHAPTER 2.391.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 1:05 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.389. by Gertie


You're a functionalist tho right?

Of sorts, yes.

Reductionism from mental states to nervous system states fails because there are no scientific bridge laws that can take us from "Mary believes it is raining outside" to a specific description of "the" brain state that would physically instantiate this state. There never could be, either. The number of physical states that could successfully instantiate this mental state are virtually infinite, in part because whether she is in that state depends on social norms.

CHAPTER 2.392.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 1:30 PM



2.387. by Steve3007

(To GE Morton, but I'll chip in)

Terrapin Station wrote: Can you give me an example of a definition that's not circular? Anything that involves pointing at instances of a type of object, or doing something equivalent, and saying "That's what I'm talking about.". That's the way that words are defined in terms of something other than other words. They're defined in terms of the common features among sets of different sensations.

??? Are you talking about ostensive definitions?

CHAPTER 2.393.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 1:34 PM

.Yes.

CHAPTER 2.394.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 2:02 PM

Faustus5 wrote: "Heat is molecular motion" = one of the classic (and rare) examples of actual, workable reductionism.

I don't see why you pick that as a particular example of reductionism. And I think you're a bit hard on poor old reductionism. I think we use it every day in almost every aspect of our lives.

CHAPTER 2.395.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 2:22 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.394. by Steve3007

I don't see why you pick that as a particular example of reductionism. And I think you're a bit hard on poor old reductionism. I think we use it every day in almost every aspect of our lives.

Only if you throw the term around like confetti without any real discipline, to the point where it stops meaning anything important. The technical definition I gave has the advantage of being rigorous and specific, always a plus in philosophy.

BUT--a lot of people prefer to just throw the term around so you have a lot of company and I do not.

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 9 6 .

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 2:30 PM

Faustus5 wrote: The technical definition I gave has the advantage of being rigorous and specific, always a plus in philosophy.

This?

Reductionism is the attempt to reconcile and link two separate vocabularies or language-games which address some phenomenon in the natural world. In sound-bite form, reduction requires that you be able to transform one vocabulary into the other either through some sort of logical deduction or through systematic application of scientific "bridge" laws.

If you cannot do this, then while you can certainly claim (if the evidence supports it) that one vocabulary is talking about the same thing as the other but at a different level of analysis, you cannot claim that one reduces to the other. The two vocabularies have a sort of autonomy from one another.

I use it to mean the process of dividing a complex system into relatively simple parts and solving for those parts on the assumption that they can be treated separately from each other or that the interfaces between them are well defined. I guess that counts as the throwing the term around like confetti thing that you mentioned?

C H A P T E R 2 . 3 9 7 .

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 3:16 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).



2.396. by Steve3007

I use it to mean the process of dividing a complex system into relatively simple parts and solving for those parts on the assumption that they can be treated separately from each other or that the interfaces between them are well defined. I guess that counts as the throwing the term around like confetti thing that you mentioned?


That's more of the layperson's understanding and it's fine if you want to use it that way.

I just tend to prefer the more demanding, technical version I picked up from philosophy of science (I didn't make it up, it's a summary of material I picked up from professional philosophers who care about this sort of thing).

But your approach is favored by more people than mine is!

CHAPTER 2.398.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 4:44 PM



2.393. by Steve3007

.Yes.

Overlooking issues with ostensive definitions in general, especially of abstract concepts, we're on a message board. How is anyone going to provide an ostensive definition?

So with respect to the definitions we can provide on a message board, how would we present a non-circular definition of anything?

CHAPTER 2.399.

~

GE Morton on  Monday, September 21, 2020 at 11:17 PM

2.372. by Atla

So your 'ephemeral qualia' can't be detected so far, and its causal relation to physical stuff can't be explained either.

Can't be detected? Of course they can be detected; if they couldn't we wouldn't be discussing them. You can detect your qualia, I can detect mine, but we can't detect each other's. And, yes, they can be explained, but not reductively, and not described.

Its identity with physical stuff is rejected, because of semantics about 'identity', even though all the known correlations point towards their identity.

Covered already. Correlations never "point to identity." They may suggest a causal relationship between two things, but not an identity between them. And, yes, I reject identity "because of semantics." "Identical" means something specific, that certain criteria are satisfied. If you're not using common words per their common semantics then you're uttering gibberish.

Yet somehow, none of this is supposed to be a 'physical stuff - qualia' dualism either, because of substance theory, which isn't even the issue here.

But it is an issue. It is implicit in the concept of dualism.

CHAPTER 2.400.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:29 AM

2.388. by Gertie

So you claim physical brain cells causally interacting create a separate thing called experience, which is not reducible to brain activity.

Why isn't it reducible?

How do you explain how that can be?

Phenomenal experience is distinguishable from brain activity, but not "separate" from it. It exists only in conjunction with (certain) brain activity (as far as we know), but it may also be produced by non-biological systems with a similar architecture. The two phenomena are intimately connected, just as an EM field is intimately connected with an operating electric motor, but is distinguishable from it.

But "Why isn't it reducible?" is the interesting question. It isn't reducible because qualia and other "mental" phenomena cannot be described in any informative way, and because they are not accessible to public inspection. When that is the case then logical deductions from physical laws to the "mental" phenomena can't be carried out, nor can an extensional equivalence between the terms in the two vocabularies ("mind talk" and "brain talk") --- the bridge laws to which Faustus referred --- be shown. In short, science can't reductively explain non-public phenomena.

And there is another reason, I've suggested before. Our scientific understanding of ourselves and the world is a conceptual model we've constructed over the centuries; it is built upon a cognitive model our brains construct automatically, to integrate all the data being delivered constantly over sensory channels into some coherent whole --- *that is the world as we experience it.*

So when asking for a reductive explanation of mental phenomena, we're asking science to model the very mechanism by which conceptual models are created. But the mechanisms for creating

models must always be more complex than the models it creates. So there will be aspects, features, processes, in play in that mechanism which cannot be captured in any model it creates. It could only be modeled by a system larger than itself.

In other words, scientific theories can't fully explain the mechanisms or processes involved in creating theories. Ouroboros, but the snake can never quite manage to bite its own tail.

CHAPTER 2.401.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 8:43 AM

Terrapin Station wrote: Overlooking issues with ostensive definitions in general, especially of abstract concepts, we're on a message board. How is anyone going to provide an ostensive definition?

So with respect to the definitions we can provide on a message board, how would we present a non-circular definition of anything?

As I was saying in my last post, I think you already gave an answer to that in your previous reply. I suggested that a definition of physical which can be summarized as "physical = material" doesn't advance the definition of physical much because it just means we then have to define material. You said this:

Aside from that, is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to? If we're dealing with such a person, who would have to be a very odd person, maybe from another planet or some kind of robot or something, then we'd need to proceed by trying to figure out some terms that they do have a grasp on, because otherwise we might exhaust hundreds where the person would say, "I have no idea what that is, either." That could be endless if they're odd enough.

I didn't think the idea was supposed to be that we were supposed to bootstrap, or pretend to bootstrap, someone who has no idea of what any term at all might refer to.

I take that to mean that we, quite reasonably, assume that we're not talking to an alien or a newborn child (or evolution/creation). We're talking to a person who already has years of memories of sensory experiences, and the theories about a real world stemming from those experiences, to draw on. (And they're not playing a rhetorical game of pretending that they don't). That's years of ostensive definitions, one of which is the definition of matter. So even if we're not in that person's presence, and can't literally point to something, we can say something like "Matter. You know. All that stuff around you. That thing sitting in front of you. That thing you're sitting on." We can rely on the fact that lots of "pointing" has already been done in the past. We can refer to past ostensive definitions. But those past ostensive definitions have to be there. As it seems to me that you said in the above, we obviously assume that they are there.

So when I said this:

Steve3007 wrote: I don't think many people would suggest that "physical" means "relating to physics as it currently happens to be". As I've said a few times myself, I think the only useful (as opposed to empty/circular) definition of "physical" is something like "the things we propose to be the common causes of, or patterns in, diverse potential and actual sensations.". Since physics is a fundamentally empirical subject, I think a reasonable shorthand is therefore to say that "physical" means "the kinds of things that physics studies".

I think that what you said above confirms it. We define "material" in terms of "the things we propose to be the common causes of, or patterns in, diverse potential and actual sensations.". We assume that, being an adult human being, the person we're talking to has already done that.

CHAPTER 2.402.

~

evolution on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 9:33 AM

2.375. by Terrapin Station

2.373. by evolution

Once again, you pose a statement, and again about me, but add a question mark at the end of your statement.

Aside from the typo, it was a question. Here it is without the typo:

Is it not something you're interested in?

What is the word 'it' here in relation to, EXACTLY?

Which one of the at least two possibilities are you referring to?

2.375. by Terrapin Station

You're not (philosophically) curious what propositional knowledge is?

Once again, you are proposing knowledge, but with a question mark at the end.

So, which one of the two is it?

2.375. by Terrapin Station

Can you answer those questions?

Yes.

2.375. by Terrapin Station

I'll answer yours after we're through with this part. Tit for tat.

You will answer my 'what', exactly, after we are through with 'what part', exactly?

CHAPTER 2.403.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 11:34 AM



2.402. by evolution

What is the word 'it' here in relation to, EXACTLY?

Philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge.

CHAPTER 2.404.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 11:37 AM



2.401. by Steve3007

We define "material" in terms of "the things we propose to be the common causes of, or patterns in, diverse potential and actual sensations.". We assume that, being an adult human being, the person we're talking to has already done that.

You'd be wrong that that's what everyone is doing. Again, not everything is about epistemology to everyone. Not everything is about us to everyone.

CHAPTER 2.405.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 11:47 AM

Terrapin Station wrote:You'd be wrong that that's what everyone is doing. Again, not everything is about epistemology to everyone. Not everything is about us to everyone.

I didn't say that "everything is about us to everyone" or anyone. I didn't say "everything is about epistemology to everyone" or to anyone. But I know from past conversations that this is a common theme of yours.

So, to return to this question of yours:


Aside from that, is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to?

As I said, the answer is, no. We're not dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" or "material" might refer to.

How have they gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

CHAPTER 2.406.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 11:56 AM



Aside from that, ostensive definitions, insofar as they function as *definitions*, are still circular. If the definiens isn't the same as the definiendum, just expressed another way, so that both refer to each other, it's not a definition, it's something else. If we give something that's just an *example* of what we're referring to, we're not giving a definition.

So ostension only works for definition's sake--that is, so that it's literally a definiens for the definiendum--when what we're pointing at identical to and the entirety of what we're referring to with the term in question. And if we pointed to the same thing and said, "What's that?" Then we could give the term in response. So that's still circular, as definitions must be if they're to be definitions. Circularity isn't a problem with definitions--they're not arguments in support of something; circularity is a necessary *feature* of definitions.

CHAPTER 2.407.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:34 PM

Terrapin Station wrote: If we give something that's just an example of what we're referring to, we're not giving a definition.

And we're probably not doing anything very useful. But we don't generally do that do we? We point to lots of examples. As many as it takes. The person watching us and listening to us figures out what the examples we're pointing at uniquely have in common and eventually learns to point to new examples, that we haven't yet pointed to, by themselves. If they get it wrong, we correct them. (Have you got kids?)

If I say "what is matter" and you point to a cup and leave it at that, I'm unlikely to get a good sense of what the word "matter" means. But if you said something like "it's everything that you can see and which you can confirm that other people can also see" (in other words you effectively point to everything) that might work better.

What you seem to have done so far is effectively say "What a stupid question! Everyone knows what matter is!" and to further say that anyone who tries to suggest that we learn what things are by seeing them is obsessed with epistemology. Seems odd to me.

CHAPTER 2.408.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:39 PM

So, to return to this question of yours:

Terrapin Station wrote: Aside from that, is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to?

As I said, the answer is, no. We're not dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" or "material" might refer to.

How have they gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

CHAPTER 2.409.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:41 PM

2.400. by GE Morton

2.388. by Gertie

So you claim physical brain cells causally interacting create a separate thing called experience, which is not reducible to brain activity.

Why isn't it reducible?

How do you explain how that can be?

Phenomenal experience is distinguishable from brain activity, but not "separate" from it. It exists only in conjunction with (certain) brain activity (as far as we know), but it may also be produced by non-biological systems with a similar architecture. The two phenomena are intimately connected, just as an EM field is intimately connected with an operating electric motor, but is distinguishable from it.

But "Why isn't it reducible?" is the interesting question. It isn't reducible because qualia and other "mental" phenomena cannot be described in any informative way, and because they are not accessible to public inspection. When that is the case then logical deductions from physical laws to the "mental" phenomena can't be carried out, nor can an extensional equivalence between the terms in the two vocabularies ("mind talk" and "brain talk") --- the bridge laws to which Faustus referred --- be shown. In short, science can't reductively explain non-public phenomena.

And there is another reason, I've suggested before. Our scientific understanding of ourselves and the world is a conceptual model we've constructed over the centuries; it is built upon a cognitive model our brains construct automatically, to integrate all the data being delivered constantly over sensory channels into some coherent whole --- that is the world as we experience it.

So when asking for a reductive explanation of mental phenomena, we're asking science to model the very mechanism by which conceptual models are created. But the mechanisms for creating models must always be more complex than the models it creates. So there will be aspects, features, processes, in play in that mechanism which cannot be captured in any model it creates. It could only be modeled by a system larger than itself.

In other words, scientific theories can't fully explain the mechanisms or processes involved in creating theories. Ouroboros, but the snake can never quite manage to bite its own tail.

Good post, I agree with the problem re reducibility and how this is potentially a way out. (Tho I don't think we can assume it will never be resolved).

The **How can you know** question still applies. And I think is only exacerbated by (rightly) accepting that all we have is a necessarily limited and flawed model of our own making to work with.

That aside, the question remains of how brain matter can generate experience, what is it about brains in certain states that does it and why. And how does generated experience feed back information to brain matter. Conversely, I don't think this necessarily precludes this generating of experience being a universal aspect of all matter.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:43 PM



2.407. by Steve3007

What you seem to have done so far is effectively say "What a stupid question! Everyone knows what matter is!" and to further say that anyone who tries to suggest that we learn what things are by seeing them is obsessed with epistemology. Seems odd to me.

Actually, what I was doing was saying, "I don't define it in either of those ways" (as appealing to physics as such or in some colloquial "can I see it/touch it" etc. sense), and I gave the alternate way I define it instead. The idea wasn't supposed to be that we then pretend to not know what I'm referring to. I didn't address the appeal to physics or the colloquial senses by pretending to not know what they're referring to, as if that would have any usefulness.

(And yeah, I have both kids and grandkids.)

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 1:58 PM

2.399. by GE Morton

Can't be detected? Of course they can be detected; if they couldn't we wouldn't be discussing them. You can detect your qualia, I can detect mine, but we can't detect each other's. And, yes, they can be explained, but not reductively, and not described.

Again: physics can't detect qualia. According to physics, qualia doesn't exist. That's the problem.

Covered already. Correlations never "point to identity." They may suggest a causal relationship between two things, but not an identity between them. And, yes, I reject identity "because of semantics." "Identical" means something specific, that certain criteria are satisfied. If you're not using common words per their common semantics then you're uttering gibberish.

It's literally called the 'Mind/Brain identity theory'. And here, the mental and the physical are thought to correlate. All common semantics.

But it is an issue. It is implicit in the concept of dualism.

The idea of substance is implicit in substance monism, substance dualism, substance pluralism etc. Anyway, your view is probably dualism (substance or not) as long as you can't explain what qualia are, when physics can't detect them.

CHAPTER 2.412.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 2:38 PM

I guess I'll answer my own question then.

Steve3007 wrote:How have they gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

By living in the world for probably several decades, and thereby seeing lots of examples of matter. Just like when my kids were little and I pointed to cats and said "Look! Cat! Look! Another cat!"

We can define loads of words that refer to real things in terms of other words. (e.g. physical = matter and its inter-relations) but ultimately, obviously, if it's going to be anything other than an abstract word/classification game, the chain of definition leads to patterns in sensations. And since physics is about spotting patterns in sensations, it's not unreasonable to define "the physical" as "the kind of stuff that physics studies". This doesn't somehow mean that we're elevating the status of physics. It doesn't somehow make us self-centred or solipsistic. It doesn't somehow mean that we're claiming that the only matter which exists is that which we and our friends can see. Using empirical evidence to construct our ontology doesn't amount to mistaking or conflating epistemology with ontology.

CHAPTER 2.413.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 2:46 PM



2.412. by Steve3007

I guess I'll answer my own question then.

Steve3007 wrote:How have they gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

By living in the world for probably several decades, and thereby seeing lots of examples of matter. Just like when my kids were little and I pointed to cats and said "Look! Cat! Look! Another cat!"

We can define loads of words that refer to real things in terms of other words. (e.g. physical = matter and its inter-relations) but ultimately, obviously, if it's going to be anything other than an abstract word/classification game, the chain of definition leads to patterns in sensations. And since physics is about spotting patterns in sensations, it's not unreasonable to define "the physical" as "the kind of stuff that physics studies". This doesn't somehow mean that we're elevating the status of physics. It doesn't somehow make us self-centred or solipsistic. It doesn't somehow mean that we're claiming that the only matter which exists is that which we and our friends can see. Using empirical evidence to construct our ontology doesn't amount to mistaking or conflating epistemology with ontology.

Wait--so first, you know that GE Morton explicitly gave two different senses of the term "physical," right?

CHAPTER 2.414.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 2:49 PM

So how would you say they've gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

CHAPTER 2.415.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 2:51 PM

(i'm not really up for all this distraction stuff. I'd rather just follow through on this point.)

CHAPTER 2.416.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 3:16 PM

2.411. by Atla

2.399. by GE Morton

Can't be detected? Of course they can be detected; if they couldn't we wouldn't be discussing them. You can detect your qualia, I can detect mine, but we can't detect each other's. And, yes, they can be explained, but not reductively, and not described.

Again: physics can't detect qualia. According to physics, qualia doesn't exist. That's the problem.

"Physics" doesn't detect anything. WE detect things. Physics -- a conceptual model we've invented --- tries to explain some of what we've detected. That model does not embrace qualia because they are not publicly observable phenomena. "Physics" doesn't deny that qualia exist; it is silent on the matter. And, no it is not problem that physics doesn't embrace qualia. There are entire realms of phenomena physics doesn't explain, or even attempt to do so (law, economics, art, games, ethics, etc.).

It's literally called the 'Mind/Brain identity theory'. And here, the mental and the physical are thought to correlate. All common semantics.

Yes, it is so called. But that is a misnomer. The two things are clearly not identical, per the common definitions of that term. The "Mind/Brain Correlation" theory would be more apropos.

Anyway, your view is probably dualism (substance or not) as long as you can't explain what qualia are, when physics can't detect them.

Does the fact that physics can't explain economics also imply dualism? If so, then we are all dualists.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 3:32 PM

2.416. by GE Morton

2.411. by Atla

Again: physics can't detect qualia. According to physics, qualia doesn't exist. That's the problem.

"Physics" doesn't detect anything. WE detect things. Physics -- a conceptual model we've invented --- tries to explain some of what we've detected. That model does not embrace qualia because they are not publicly observable phenomena. "Physics" doesn't deny that qualia exist; it is silent on the matter. And, no it is not problem that physics doesn't embrace qualia. There are entire realms of phenomena physics doesn't explain, or even attempt to do so (law, economics, art, games, ethics, etc.).

It's literally called the 'Mind/Brain identity theory'. And here, the mental and the physical are thought to correlate. All common semantics.

Yes, it is so called. But that is a misnomer. The two things are clearly not identical, per the common definitions of that term. The "Mind/Brain Correlation" theory would be more apropos.

Anyway, your view is probably dualism (substance or not) as long as you can't explain what qualia are, when physics can't detect them.

Does the fact that physics can't explain economics also imply dualism? If so, then we are all dualists.

Trying to draw a parallel between the physics vs (law, economics, art, games, ethics, etc.), and the physics vs qualia issue. You are completely confused.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 3:35 PM

2.414. by Steve3007

So how would you say they've gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

Heh. Good question. TP has a problem with his understanding of meanings. He claims the denotative meaning of a word is "something in people's heads," rather than the things-in-the-world to which that word refers, which it denotes. But since "things in people's heads" are necessarily private, Alfie can never know what Bruno means by the word "dog." Hence communication of information via speech is impossible --- a *reductio ad absurdum*. He confuses knowledge of a meaning with the meaning.

CHAPTER 2.419.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 4:05 PM

GE Morton wrote: Heh. Good question. TP has a problem with his understanding of meanings. He claims the denotative meaning of a word is "something in people's heads," rather than the things-in-the-world to which that word refers, which it denotes. But since "things in people's heads" are necessarily private, Alfie can never know what Bruno means by the word "dog." Hence communication of information via speech is impossible --- a reductio ad absurdum. He confuses knowledge of a meaning with the meaning.

I just don't seem to be able to get him to acknowledge what seems to me to be the plain and obvious fact that we ultimately define terms such as "matter" by looking at examples of stuff that we've decided to give that label. I get utterly irrelevant replies like this:

Again, not everything is about epistemology to everyone. Not everything is about us to everyone.

One of his longstanding obsessions (along with the old one of telling people that they're reifying abstractions) seems to be some kind of idea that people are secretly solipsistic and/or that they can't separate ontology from epistemology. As soon as you start trying to talk about how we use empirical evidence to create an ontology, presumably as opposed to creating an ontology by just thinking about it, that accusation seems to surface.

It's as if saying "I decide how the world is by looking at the evidence of how it *appears to be*" is misinterpreted as "the way the world is is dictated by how it *appears to be* to me."

CHAPTER 2.420.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 6:00 PM



2.414. by Steve3007

So how would you say they've gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

I don't care about that at the moment. I was simply giving an alternate definition in contradistinction to the two he gave.

CHAPTER 2.421.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 1:16 AM

2.409. by Gertie

The How can you know question still applies. And I think is only exacerbated by (rightly) accepting that all we have is a necessarily limited and flawed model of our own making to work with.

We can't know that the cognitive model theory is "right," i.e., true or false. It's just a theory, and theories are never true or false. They're only good or bad, sound or unsound, depending upon how well unify and render coherent some set of phenomena, suggest future observations, and correctly predict their results. They're explanatory constructs.

*That aside, the question remains of how brain matter can generate experience, what is it about brains in certain states that does it and why.
And how does generated experience feed back information to brain matter.*

Well, that sounds like you're asking for a reductive explanation, which, for the reasons given --- per that theory --- will be forever unobtainable.

Conversely, I don't think this necessarily precludes this generating of experience being a universal aspect of all matter.

That is another theory. But if there is no way to test, to determine, whether or not rocks (for example) have experience, then the theory is vacuous. It will not lead us to any new knowledge.

CHAPTER 2.422.

~

evolution on  Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 3:20 AM

2.403. by Terrapin Station

2.402. by evolution

*What is the word 'it' here in relation to, EXACTLY?
Philosophical analysis of propositional knowledge.*

Yes.

But this may be due to the fact that the way you define some words is completely opposite of how I do.

CHAPTER 2.423.

~

GE Morton on  Friday, September 25, 2020 at 3:16 PM

Gertie . . .

You might find two articles in this week's issue of *Science* of interest --- both on the structural neural correlates of consciousness in birds. The editors' summary article is below. (The two research articles are too long to post here).



Birds do have a brain cortex—and think

Like mammals, birds have a pallium that sustains correlates of consciousness

By Suzana Herculano-Houzel *

The term “birdbrain” used to be derogatory. But humans, with their limited brain size, should have known better than to use the meager proportions of the bird brain as an insult. Part of the cause for derision is that the mantle, or pallium, of the bird brain lacks the obvious layering that earned the mammalian pallium its “cerebral cortex” label. However, birds, and particularly corvids (such as ravens), are as cognitively capable as monkeys (1) and even great apes (2). Because their neurons are smaller, the pallium of songbirds and parrots actually comprises many more information-processing neuronal units than the equivalent-sized mammalian cortices (3). On page 1626 of this issue, Nieder et al. (4) show that the bird pallium has neurons that represent what it perceives—a hallmark of consciousness. And on page 1585 of this issue, Stacho et al. (5) establish that the bird pallium has similar organization to the mammalian cortex.

The studies of Nieder et al. and Stacho et al. are noteworthy in their own ways, but not because either is the first demonstration of close parallels between mammalian and bird pallia. That neuroscientists still refer to how bird cognition happens “without a cerebral

cortex” (6), as Nieder et al. have done themselves (4), is a testament to how neuroscience has grown so much that specialists in different subfields often are not familiar with each other’s findings, even when groundbreaking.

Stating that birds do not have a cerebral cortex has been doubly wrong for several years. Birds do have a cerebral cortex, in the sense that both their pallium and the mammalian counterpart are enormous neuronal populations derived from the same dorsal half of the second neuromere in neural tube development (7). The second neuromere is important: The pallium of birds and mammals lies posterior to the hypothalamus, the true front part of the brain, which is then saddled in development by the rapidly bulging pallium. Owing to the painstaking, systematic comparative analyses of expression patterns of multiple homeobox (Hox) genes that compartmentalize embryonic development, it is now understood that in both birds and mammals, the pallium rests on top of all the neuronal loops formed between spinal cord, hindbrain, midbrain, thalamus, and hypothalamus.

In both birds and mammals, the pallium is the population of neurons that are not a necessary part of the most fundamental circuits that operate the body. But because the pallium receives copies, through the thalamus, of all that goes on elsewhere, these pallial neurons create new associations that endow animal behavior with flexibility and complexity. So far, it appears that the more neurons there are in the pallium as a whole, regardless of pallial, brain, or body size, the more cognitive capacity is exhibited by the animal (8). Humans remain satisfyingly on top: Despite having only half the mass of an elephant pallium, the human version still has three times its number of neurons, averaging 16 billion (9). Corvids and parrots have upwards of half a billion neurons in their pallia and can have as many as 1 or 2 billion—like monkeys (3).

Additionally, it has been known since 2013 that the circuits formed by the pallial neurons are functionally organized in a similar manner in birds as they are in mammals (10). Using resting-state neuroimaging to infer functional connectivity, the pigeon pallium was shown to be functionally organized and internally connected just like a mouse, monkey, or human pallium, with sensory areas, effector areas, richly interconnected hubs, and highly associative areas in the hippocampus and nidopallium caudolaterale.

The nidopallium caudolaterale is the equivalent of the monkey prefrontal cortex (10), the portion of the pallium that is the seat of the ability to act on thoughts, feelings, and decisions, according to the current reality informed by the senses.

Now, adding to their resting-state neuroimaging tool set the power and high resolution of polarized light microscopy to examine anatomical connectivity, Stacho et al. show that the pallia of pigeons and owls, like that of mice, monkeys, and humans, is criss-crossed by fibers that run in orthogonal planes. Repeated imaging of the brain with light shone at different orientations revealed that fibers within and across bird pallial areas are mostly (although not exclusively) organized at right angles, reminiscent of the orthogonal tangential and radial organization of cortical fibers in mammals (11). The broadminded neuroscientist with some knowledge of developmental biology might not find this surprising; what would be the alternative, a spaghetti-like disorganized jumble of fibers? But then again, the mantra that “birds do not have a cortex”

even though they share pallial development and organization with mammals has been repeated so exhaustively that recognizing that columns and layers are actually observed—visible under polarized light if not to the naked eye—brings new hope that this mantra will join the ranks of myth.

If the bird pallium as a whole is organized just like the mammalian pallium, then it follows that the part of the bird pallium that is demonstrably functionally connected like the mammalian prefrontal pallium (the nidopallium caudolaterale) should also function like it. Nieder et al., who established previously that corvids, like macaques, have sensory neurons that represent numeric quantities (12), now move on to this associative part of the bird pallium. They find that, like the macaque prefrontal cortex, the associative pallium of crows is rich in neurons that represent what the animals next report to have seen—whether or not that is what they were shown.

This representation develops over the time lapse of 1 to 2 s between the stimulus disappearing and the animal reporting what it perceived by pecking at a screen either for “yes, there was a stimulus” or for “no, there was no stimulus,” depending on a variable contingency rule. The early activity of these neurons still reflects the physical stimulus presented to the animal, which indicates that they receive secondhand sensory signals. However, as time elapses and (presumably) recurrent, associative cortical circuits progressively shape neuronal activity, the later component of the responses of the same neurons predicts instead what the animal then reports: Did it see a stimulus that indeed was there, or did it think the stimulus was there enough to report it—even if it was not? Future studies will certainly delve into more complex mental content than simply “Was it there or not?”, but concluding that birds do have what it takes to display consciousness—patterns of neuronal activity that represent mental content that drives behavior—now appears inevitable.

Because the common ancestor to birds (and non-avian reptiles) and mammals lived 320 million years ago, Nieder et al. infer that consciousness might already have been present then—or might have appeared independently in birds and mammals through convergent evolution. Those hypotheses miss an important point: how fundamental properties of life present themselves at different scales. The widespread occurrence of large mammalian bodies today does not mean that ancestral mammals were large (they were not), nor do the nearly ubiquitous folded cortices of most large mammals today imply that the ancestral cortex was folded [it was not (13)]. The physical properties that make self-avoiding surfaces buckle and fold as they expand under unequal forces apply equally to tiny and enormous cortices, but folds only present themselves past a certain size (14). Expansion of the cortical surface relative to its thickness is required for folds to appear. But that does not imply that folding evolved, because the physical principles that cause it to emerge were always there.

Perhaps the same is true of consciousness: The underpinnings are there whenever there is a pallium, or something connected like a pallium, with associative orthogonal short and long-range loops on top of the rest of the brain that

add flexibility and complexity to behavior. But the level of that complexity, and the extent to which new meanings and possibilities arise, should still scale with the number of units in the system. This would be analogous to the combined achievements of the human species when it consisted of just a few thousand individuals, versus the considerable achievements of 7 billion today.

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C H A P T E R 2 . 4 2 4 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, September 26, 2020 at 2:33 PM

GE

Interesting, thanks. Tiny neurons! Does your idea rest on a central 'control and command' structure in complex conscious creatures? A Cartesian Theatre minus the homunculous? Do we have sufficient evidence for such a thing?

The How can you know question still applies. And I think is only exacerbated by (rightly) accepting that all we have is a necessarily limited and flawed model of our own making to work with. We can't know that the cognitive model theory is "right," i.e., true or false. It's just a theory, and theories are never true or false. They're only good or bad, sound or unsound, depending upon how well unify and render coherent some set of phenomena, suggest future observations, and correctly predict their results. They're explanatory constructs.

It's a What if... which doesn't follow the usual ways we arrive at scientifically grounded theories. And which we can't reliably test because experience is private. And because it's not an explanation which tells us the necessary and sufficient conditions which might be third person observable, we can't test for those either.

That aside, the question remains of how brain matter can generate experience, what is it about brains in certain states that does it and why. And how does generated experience feed back information to brain matter.

Well, that sounds like you're asking for a reductive explanation, which, for the reasons given --- per that theory --- will be forever unobtainable.

Then it doesn't avoid the Hard Problem?

Or another problem with monist materialist identity theory - it seems to render experience redundant. If the material brain is doing the necessary behavioural work anyway, why would parallel experience evolve? Over determinism.

Your solution has the additional 'reporting back/presenting itself' aspect too. If there isn't a homunculous watching the experience the brain creates play out, behaviourally it's all only neurons interacting. To take the bee analogy, how would invisible honey affect the bee's behaviour?

Conversely, I don't think this necessarily precludes this generating of experience being a universal aspect of all matter.

That is another theory. But if there is no way to test, to determine, whether or not rocks (for example) have experience, then the theory is vacuous. It will not lead us to any new knowledge.

Just because we don't have a reliable test doesn't mean we can discount a theory with similar explanatory value as your preference - which we can't reliably test either.

CHAPTER 2.425.

~

Interesting, thanks. Tiny neurons! Does your idea rest on a central 'control and command' structure in complex conscious creatures? A Cartesian Theatre minus the homunculus? Do we have sufficient evidence for such a thing?

I think such a structure is logically implied. Decision-making has to occur somewhere. That structure is the "homunculus." What it perceives, and takes to be "reality," is the model, created and presented to it by other structures. There is plenty of room in the brain for both.

It's a What if... which doesn't follow the usual ways we arrive at scientifically grounded theories. And which we can't reliably test because experience is private. And because it's not an explanation which tells us the necessary and sufficient conditions which might be third person observable, we can't test for those either.

The only available tests are of the system's behavior. We can observe whether particular brain subsystems play the role the theory ascribes to them by disabling them and observing the effects on behavior. But no theory will be able to characterize "what it's like" to be a bat, or a crow, or even another human. We can only make inferences --- guesses --- about that, based on what it's like to be us, and similarities of others' behavior to ours. And we have plenty of behavioral evidence indicating that "what it is like" to be Mother Teresa is considerably different than "what it is like" to be Adolf Hitler (not to mention the ancient, unsolved problem of men trying to understand women, and vice-versa).

Or another problem with monist materialist identity theory - it seems to render experience redundant. If the material brain is doing the necessary behavioural work anyway, why would parallel experience evolve? Over determinism.

Subjective experience is not "parallel" to (certain) brain functioning. It is a feature of it, a product of it. It is an epiphenomenon only in the sense that an EM field is an epiphenomenon of electric motors. It's existence does not require, or imply, another realm of "substances" in the universe. Nor is it redundant --- there is no question that conscious mental events (decisions, intentions, desires), not non-conscious neural processes, initiate most human behavior (though non-conscious processes trigger some). Of course, we can ask *why* do certain physical processes produce that effect, but that is an unanswerable question --- like asking *why* electrons have negative charge, or why the speed of light is C .

Your solution has the additional 'reporting back/presenting itself' aspect too. If there isn't a homunculus watching the experience the brain creates play out, behaviourally it's all only neurons interacting. To take the bee analogy, how would invisible honey affect the bee's behaviour?

I think I said before that the "Cartesian theater, without the homunculus," was gaining new favor among some psychologists and neuro-scientists. But there is no need to banish the homunculus. Another brain system can fulfill that role.

Faustus5 on  Monday, September 28, 2020 at 12:21 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.425. by GE Morton

Subjective experience is not "parallel" to (certain) brain functioning. It is a feature of it, a product of it. It is an epiphenomenon only in the sense that an EM field is an epiphenomenon of electric motors. It's existence does not require, or imply, another realm of "substances" in the universe.

But an EM field can be intersubjectively confirmed to actually exist, and subjective experiences (in this sense) cannot. So it kind of requires another, inexplicable realm or mode of being.

I think TS's approach, that subjective experiences are just how a subject witnesses and talks about her own brain events, makes more sense and is more consistent with a scientific/materialist model of the world.

I just don't think we need the extra step of thinking brain events, in addition to having all the causal properties we can observe from the third person, also generate something else that can't be measured and have no further effects in the world. That strikes me as problematic. What does this move accomplish? Why would evolution evolve the ability of the brain to generate these pointless effects?

CHAPTER 2.427.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, September 28, 2020 at 1:31 PM



2.426. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.425. by GE Morton

Subjective experience is not "parallel" to (certain) brain functioning. It is a feature of it, a product of it. It is an epiphenomenon only in the sense that an EM field is an epiphenomenon of electric motors. It's existence does not require, or imply, another realm of "substances" in the universe.

But an EM field can be intersubjectively confirmed to actually exist, and subjective experiences (in this sense) cannot. So it kind of requires another, inexplicable realm or mode of being.

You are setting up a completely false distinction. The point is that you cannot know what it feels like to be an EM field in the same way you cannot feel another's experience. Both can be confirmed to exist.

I just don't think we need the extra step of thinking brain events, in addition to having all the causal properties we can observe from the third person, also generate something else that can't be measured and have no further effects in the world. That strikes me as problematic. What does this move accomplish? Why would evolution evolve the ability of the brain to generate these pointless effects?

Why do you think this question is even meaningful. Evolution does not happen FOR a reason. The whole point of evolution is that it is the result of change, not a force to cause it. And what makes you think that we are talking about pointless effects?

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 2 8 .

~

Gertie on  Monday, September 28, 2020 at 2:59 PM

GE

To take the homunculous self observing the Cartesian 'experiential field' idea then.

Obviously we should expect to discover brain mechanisms which account for the structural ways human experience manifests - a unified, discrete, coherent field of consciousness with the ability to focus attention, correlated with a first person pov located in a specific body.

As I understand it, your suggestion is that a specific part of human brains is effectively an experiential model of the Self-as-Experiencer (homunculous), assessing the incoming sensory qualia, reasoning, checking memory, imagining scenarios/consequences, and such. And then making decisions and issuing commands to the motor systems. And this Experiencer-Self part of the brain manifests experientially too.

If that was the case, isn't that what we'd see on brain scans? Intense activity in this central control and command area whenever we are conscious, with a radial map of routes leading from sensory subsystems and to motor subsystems? Something like a wheel hub with spokes.

But that's not what scans find. If they had, that would be our understanding of how brains work.

Instead, scans find what experience feels like. Different subsystems dominating from moment to moment, as one or another gains attentional ascendance. Right now I'm concentrating on constructing this post, the corresponding part of my brain would be lighting up on a scan, while other subsystems which aren't the 'focus of my attention' right now would likely dim. Or if I'm listening to music I love my other subsystems take a breather, if I'm remembering something vividly, my current sensations fade, etc.

Attention and focus on this or that subsystem seems to be how brains work, not everything is always present like a film being played in a Cartesian Theatre for the Self-Experiencer to take in and assess. The attention process happens automatically, unless I feel I 'intervene' and deliberately shift it.

The reporting back issue has these experiential qualia being experientially observed by the Self-Experiencer, which still has to somehow report back to the physical brain systems, if the experience is a product of brains, rather than identical with brains. It's not a way out of that problem.

Which brings us to over determinism. The 'experiential field' as a product of brain activity only avoids this problem if neural correlation doesn't hold surely. Is that your claim? That brain activity produces an 'experiential field' which then somehow escapes neural correlates? But somehow causes physical neural activity

CHAPTER 2.429.

~

Sculptor1 on  Monday, September 28, 2020 at 3:28 PM



2.428. by Gertie

GE

To take the homunculous self observing the Cartesian 'experiential field' idea then.

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As I understand it, your suggestion is that a specific part of human brains is effectively an experiential model of the Self-as-Experiencer (homunculous), assessing the incoming sensory qualia, reasoning, checking memory, imagining scenarios/consequences, and such. And then making decisions and issuing commands to the motor systems. And this Experiencer-Self part of the brain manifests experientially too.

If that was the case, isn't that what we'd see on brain scans? Intense activity in this central control and command area whenever we are conscious, with a radial map of routes leading from sensory subsystems and to motor subsystems? Something like a wheel hub with spokes.

Why would you think that? LOL

But that's not what scans find. If they had, that would be our understanding of how brains work.

And no one expected to find any spokes or hubs, why should they?

Instead, scans find what experience feels like.

No. Scans SHOW cerebral activity which of experience which is consistent with similar or the same types of experience; ie. speech effect, visual effects, pleasure effects and so on light up specific areas of the cerebral cortex. as would be expected.

Different subsystems dominating from moment to moment, as one or another gains attentional ascendance. Right now I'm concentrating on constructing this post, the corresponding part of my brain would be lighting up on a scan, while other subsystems which aren't the 'focus of my attention' right now would likely dim. Or if I'm listening to music I love my other subsystems take a breather, if I'm remembering something vividly, my current sensations fade, etc.

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The reporting back issue has these experiential qualia being experientially observed by the Self-Experiencer, which still has to somehow report back to the physical brain systems, if the experience is a product of brains, rather than identical with brains. It's not a way out of that problem.

A sculpture of Caesar is made of marble, marble is not the same as the sculpture of Caesar. So what, and how the brain is acting, in the sense of how it is structuring, how it is making connections, and what is the energetic state of down to microscopic levels is the experience, details impossible to see with a scanner. And since a scanner is not a brain, we ought to expect only a very partial understanding of the "experience" just by looking at pretty pictures from afar - because the scanner is no better.

Which brings us to over determinism. The 'experiential field' as a product of brain activity only avoids this problem if neural correlation doesn't hold surely. Is that your claim? That brain activity produces an 'experiential field' which then somehow escapes neural correlates? But somehow causes physical neural activity

The experience IS the neural activity. That is what a brain does.

CHAPTER 2.430.

~

Gertie on  Monday, September 28, 2020 at 4:16 PM

2.429. by Sculptor1

2.428. by Gertie

GE

To take the homunculous self observing the Cartesian 'experiential field' idea then.

Obviously we should expect to discover brain mechanisms which account for the structural ways human experience manifests – a unified, discrete, coherent field of consciousness with the ability to focus attention, correlated with a first person pov located in a specific body.

As I understand it, your suggestion is that a specific part of human brains is effectively an experiential model of the Self-as-Experiencer (homunculous), assessing the incoming sensory qualia, reasoning, checking memory, imagining scenarios/consequences, and such. And then making decisions and issuing commands to the motor systems. And this Experiencer-Self part of the brain manifests experientially too.

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Which brings us to over determinism. The 'experiential field' as a product of brain activity only avoids this problem if neural correlation doesn't hold surely. Is that your claim? That brain activity produces an 'experiential field' which then somehow escapes neural correlates? But somehow causes physical neural activity

The experience IS the neural activity. That is what a brain does.

I'm addressing GE's homunculus idea. Tell it to him.

CHAPTER 2.431.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Monday, September 28, 2020 at 5:42 PM

2.426. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.425. by GE Morton

Subjective experience is not "parallel" to (certain) brain functioning. It is a feature of it, a product of it. It is an epiphenomenon only in the sense that an EM field is an epiphenomenon of electric motors. It's existence does not require, or imply, another realm of "substances" in the universe. But an EM field can be intersubjectively confirmed to actually exist, and subjective experiences (in this sense) cannot. So it kind of requires another, inexplicable realm or mode of being.

Well, though you qualified your claim with "kind of," it is still a *non sequitur*. That some phenomena are subjective (not observable by third parties) is an epistemological fact, but epistemological facts don't entail any ontological facts. We can just as easily account for those phenomena as predictable effects of certain physical processes. Because they are the mode via which external information is represented internally in the system they are necessarily unobservable externally. Per Occam, "don't multiply entities needlessly."

I think TS's approach, that subjective experiences are just how a subject witnesses and talks about her own brain events, makes more sense and is more consistent with a scientific/materialist model of the world.

As I've pointed out before, that begs the question. The question of whether two (alleged) things are identical can only be answered on the basis of what we perceive, or "witness." If they appear different then we have to assume they are different, unless we can reconcile the apparent differences as due to differences in observational circumstances. That can't be done re: qualia and brain states. So we're not warranted in claiming them to be identical. But that they are not identical doesn't mean there is no essential and intimate relationship between them. There is. Qualia are "physical/materialist effects," even though they are subjective.

I just don't think we need the extra step of thinking brain events, in addition to having all the causal properties we can observe from the third person, also generate something else that can't be measured and have no further effects in the world.

Qualia can be measured in certain ways --- duration, intensity --- by the person experiencing them, though not by third parties (who may be able to measure the brain processes correlated with

them). And they do have ubiquitous effects in the world. A decision by me to post this comment --- a mental phenomenon --- caused my fingers to move over my keyboard. That is the only cause of that behavior I can know of directly --- though I'm the only one who can know that. Everyone else may only *infer* that some such decision was made.

CHAPTER 2.432.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, September 28, 2020 at 6:20 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.427. by Sculptor1

Both can be confirmed to exist.

Can they both be confirmed to exist through intersubjective processes?

2.427. by Sculptor1

And what makes you think that we are talking about pointless effects?

Please articulate how something that has been described as "epiphenomenal" can have a point or a meaningful causal role to play.

CHAPTER 2.433.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, September 28, 2020 at 6:37 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.431. by GE Morton

A decision by me to post this comment --- a mental phenomenon --- caused my fingers to move over my keyboard. That is the only cause of that behavior I can know of directly --- though I'm the only one who can know that.

I appreciate that you are trying to approach qualia in a non-dualist fashion that remains consistent with scientific inquiry, but I'm still smelling dualism almost every time you describe such things, as in the above quote.

An uncharitable reading of this quote of yours suggests that you picture first a mental event in the world, then you imagine that this mental event creates a cascade of brain events leading eventually to activity in the motor sections of your brain guiding your fingers on the keyboard.

That is clearly dualism, but this isn't how you want me to interpret your two sentences, hence my

characterizing it as an unfair interpretation.

So how should we interpret such an event?

In terms of causality consistent with cognitive neuroscience, we do not have a mental event causing physical events. In fact, we cannot have that. We have physical brain events all the way down, period, with only the initiating brain event being a conscious event, and conscious only by virtue of the fact that it was registered in the short term memory of the brain's global workspace, another series of completely physical processes.

I don't see any need to multiply entities and add to all of this that there was a special epiphenomenal (and therefore pointless and non-functional) "glow" emitted by some of the brain processes that created a mental phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2.434.

~

GE Morton on  Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 5:18 PM

2.428. by Gertie

GE

To take the homunculous self observing the Cartesian 'experiential field' idea then.

Obviously we should expect to discover brain mechanisms which account for the structural ways human experience manifests – a unified, discrete, coherent field of consciousness with the ability to focus attention, correlated with a first person pov located in a specific body.

As I understand it, your suggestion is that a specific part of human brains is effectively an experiential model of the Self-as-Experiencer (homunculous), assessing the incoming sensory qualia, reasoning, checking memory, imagining scenarios/consequences, and such. And then making decisions and issuing commands to the motor systems. And this Experiencer-Self part of the brain manifests experientially too.

Not quite (or perhaps this is only a terminological quibble). The "homunculus" (the subsystem which assesses the information represented in the model and initiates actions) is not *per se* represented in the model, and is not aware of itself as a brain subsystem. What it recognizes as "itself" is "that which is having these experiences," plus the representation of the organism as a whole in the model. (In other words, the brain system which apprehends the model is not aware of its own workings).

If that was the case, isn't that what we'd see on brain scans? Intense activity in this central control and command area whenever we are conscious, with a radial map of routes leading from sensory subsystems and to motor subsystems? Something like a wheel hub with spokes.

That would depend upon how that subsystem is distributed. The "homunculus" may not be localized in a particular brain area.

But that's not what scans find. If they had, that would be our understanding of how brains work.

Instead, scans find what experience feels like. Different subsystems dominating from moment to moment, as one or another gains attentional ascendancy. Right now I'm concentrating on constructing this post, the corresponding part of my brain would be lighting up on a scan, while other subsystems which aren't the 'focus of my attention' right now would likely dim. Or if I'm listening to music I love my other subsystems take a breather, if I'm remembering something vividly, my current sensations fade, etc.

Inputs over the different sensory channels (vision, olfactory, tactile, etc.) deliver their signals to specific areas of the brain, for preliminary processing. Those areas will "light up" on scans when there is input over those channels. But as far as I know there is no "part of the brain" that corresponds to "concentrating on constructing this post." At best the scans can reveal that you're concentrating on *something*. But if you have a link to some work that indicates otherwise, please post.

Attention and focus on this or that subsystem seems to be how brains work, not everything is always present like a film being played in a Cartesian Theatre for the Self-Experiencer to take in and assess. The attention process happens automatically, unless I feel I 'intervene' and deliberately shift it.

Keep in mind that even at the Orpheum, your attention is directed to specific things/events on the screen from moment to moment. But the entire screen is always before you.

The reporting back issue has these experiential qualia being experientially observed by the Self-Experiencer, which still has to somehow report back to the physical brain systems, if the experience is a product of brains, rather than identical with brains. It's not a way out of that problem.

That is only a problem if you're imagining the homunculus to be something separate from the brain. But it isn't; it is intimately connected to it, but not identical with it.

Which brings us to over determinism. The 'experiential field' as a product of brain activity only avoids this problem if neural correlation doesn't hold surely. Is that your claim? That brain activity produces an 'experiential field' which then somehow escapes neural correlates? But somehow causes physical neural activity

Oh, no. Phenomenal experience is strongly correlated with brain states; the former only exists as long as the latter does. But correlation is not identity, and does not entail it.

The chief architect of the "Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity" is Thomas Metzinger (no, this theory was not invented by me!). His book, "Being No One, The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity" is here (among many other places):

[https://www.amazon.com/Being-No-One-Sel ... 0262633086](https://www.amazon.com/Being-No-One-Sel...0262633086)

A precis by Metzinger is here:

[https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/d ... 1&type=pdf](https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/d...1&type=pdf)



GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 2:52 AM

2.433. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.431. by GE Morton

A decision by me to post this comment --- a mental phenomenon --- caused my fingers to move over my keyboard. That is the only cause of that behavior I can know of directly --- though I'm the only one who can know that.

I appreciate that you are trying to approach qualia in a non-dualist fashion that remains consistent with scientific inquiry, but I'm still smelling dualism almost every time you describe such things, as in the above quote.

An uncharitable reading of this quote of yours suggests that you picture first a mental event in the world . . .

"Mental event in the world"? That's an odd phrase. Usually we reserve "in the world" to denote phenomena outside ourselves.

. . . then you imagine that this mental event creates a cascade of brain events leading eventually to activity in the motor sections of your brain guiding your fingers on the keyboard.

Yes.

That is clearly dualism, but this isn't how you want me to interpret your two sentences, hence my characterizing it as an unfair interpretation.

It is only dualism if you construe that mental event to be a non-physical phenomenon. My argument is that it isn't; it is a physical phenomenon, though one that is not reducible to other physical phenomena for explicable, understandable reasons.

In terms of causality consistent with cognitive neuroscience, we do not have a mental event causing physical events.

Yes; Dennett *et al* would so claim. But that claim is palpably false, as everyone who has ever had a thought, made a decision, formed an opinion, reached a judgment will confidently testify. I know without doubt, as did Descartes, that my actions are caused by acts of will (i.e., mental events). There is nothing of which I am more certain.

Now it may also be true that they are caused by brain processes, events. But that is a theory, which is another mental artifact, a conceptual construct. It is a very good theory, but the causal chain it postulates needs to be modified: brain process ---> mental event ---> physical action. Brain processes have a place in the causal chain, but (for willful, intentional actions) a conscious event intervenes. Yes, that conscious event is itself a product of a brain process. But it is the only phenomenon of which we have direct, immediate knowledge, and is the starting point of all inquiries and theories (which are themselves conscious phenomena).

Theories of consciousness which endeavor to eliminate qualia and other mental phenomena entail a variant of Epimenides Paradox: not only do they eliminate the very phenomena they seek to explain, but themselves as well, since theories are themselves mental constructs.

CHAPTER 2.436.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 11:17 AM

2.428. by Gertie

GE

To take the homunculous self observing the Cartesian 'experiential field' idea then.

Obviously we should expect to discover brain mechanisms which account for the structural ways human experience manifests – a unified, discrete, coherent field of consciousness with the ability to focus attention, correlated with a first person pov located in a specific body.

As I understand it, your suggestion is that a specific part of human brains is effectively an experiential model of the Self-as-Experiencer (homunculous), assessing the incoming sensory qualia, reasoning, checking memory, imagining scenarios/consequences, and such. And then making decisions and issuing commands to the motor systems. And this Experiencer-Self part of the brain manifests experientially too.

Not quite (or perhaps this is only a terminological quibble). The "homunculus" (the subsystem which assesses the information represented in the model and initiates actions) is not per se represented in the model, and is not aware of itself as a brain subsystem. What it recognizes as "itself" is "that which is having these experiences," plus the representation of the organism as a whole in the model. (In other words, the brain system which apprehends the model is not aware of its own workings).

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Instead, scans find what experience feels like. Different subsystems dominating from moment to moment, as one or another gains attentional ascendancy. Right now I'm concentrating on constructing this post, the corresponding part of my brain would be lighting up on a scan, while other subsystems which aren't the 'focus of my attention' right now would likely dim. Or if I'm listening to music I love my other subsystems take a breather, if I'm remembering something vividly, my current sensations fade, etc.

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Attention and focus on this or that subsystem seems to be how brains work, not everything is always present like a film being played in a Cartesian Theatre for the Self-Experiencer to take in and assess. The attention process happens automatically, unless I feel I 'intervene' and deliberately shift it.

Keep in mind that even at the Orpheum, your attention is directed to specific things/events on the screen from moment to moment. But the entire screen is always before you.

The reporting back issue has these experiential qualia being experientially observed by the Self-Experiencer, which still has to somehow report back to the physical brain systems, if the experience is a product of brains, rather than identical with brains. It's not a way out of that problem.

That is only a problem if you're imagining the homunculus to be something separate from the brain. But it isn't; it is intimately connected to it, but not identical with it.

Which brings us to over determinism. The 'experiential field' as a product of brain activity only avoids this problem if neural correlation doesn't hold surely. Is that your claim? That brain activity produces an 'experiential field' which then somehow escapes neural correlates? But somehow causes physical neural activity

Oh, no. Phenomenal experience is strongly correlated with brain states; the former only exists as long as the latter does. But correlation is not identity, and does not entail it.

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OK, here are the problems as I see them then.

As you agree neural correlation holds, then you're still stuck with the Hard Problem. Positing that experience is some kind of 'field' science can't account for, has no more explanatory value than positing it is some kind of 'perspective', or any other monist substance materialist 'What If'.

You're still stuck with addressing Over Determinism too, like all monist materialist positions. If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.

You have an additional problem not just with explaining the generation of the 'experiential field', but with the way this field feeds back info/instructions to the physical brain systems.

If you're relying on neural correlation to explain that - see above. If alternatively you're relying on a Homunculus/Cartesian Theatre model to explain it, it just puts the problem a step. And we'd expect to be able to locate the homunculus brain system which activates any time a person is conscious, with neural connections centring there. We don't find that. We know there must be some mechanism whereby a sense of self-as-unified-observer/experiencer arises from the brain's inter-connected sub-systems, but it doesn't seem to be a homunculus/Cartesian Theatre type mechanism.

Testing - there is no way to test your preferred 'What If' against others.

CHAPTER 2.437.

~

Faustus5 on  Friday, October 2, 2020 at 2:42 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.435. by GE Morton

Yes; Dennett et al would so claim.

Not just Dennett, but anyone committed to a non-dualist, non-supernatural model of consciousness, which you seemed to do when you earlier agreed that of course mental phenomena are just physical phenomena. Physical phenomena are only caused by other physical phenomena. There is no such thing as a mental event that is somehow physical but not a brain event.

2.435. by GE Morton

But that claim is palpably false, as everyone who has ever had a thought, made a decision, formed an opinion, reached a judgment will confidently testify. I know without doubt, as did Descartes, that my actions are caused by acts of will (i.e., mental events). There is nothing of which I am more certain.

I think you are conflating two things that need to be kept very far apart from one another.

A. What everyone agrees exists and needs to be explained (mental phenomenon, subjective experience, whatever you want to call them). As you say, that these exist is something that no one can deny or wants to deny. Dennett, for instance, does not deny them and can only be characterized as having done so by deliberately ignoring his actual words.

B. One's theoretical or ideological commitments to how the elements in A are best characterized and explained. One never establishes the reality of such commitments by claiming they cannot be denied. One establishes such commitments by making reasoned, evidence based arguments showing they are better than the alternatives.

2.435. by GE Morton

It is a very good theory, but the causal chain it postulates needs to be modified: brain process ---> mental event ---> physical action. Brain processes have a place in the causal chain, but (for willful, intentional actions) a conscious event intervenes.

If mental events are physical events, which you earlier committed to, they can only be brain processes. There is literally no available alternative consistent with established cognitive neuroscience, which leads me to think I must be confused about what you are and are not trying to say. :oops:

2.435. by GE Morton

Theories of consciousness which endeavor to eliminate qualia and other mental phenomena entail a variant of Epimenides Paradox. . .

Not even remotely, not by a zillion light years, is this statement true. Scientific theories are not logical theorems.

CHAPTER 2.438.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, October 2, 2020 at 2:53 PM



2.435. by GE Morton

It is only dualism if you construe that mental event to be a non-physical phenomenon. My argument is that it isn't; it is a physical phenomenon, though one that is not reducible to other physical phenomena for explicable, understandable reasons.

Yet you use "physical" somewhere between the colloquial "tangible/visible with the naked eye" etc. and "addressed by the scientific discipline of physics" while saying that mental phenomena are not identical to brain phenomena on your view. So what tangible or addressed-by-physics thing, aside from the brain, is mentality, exactly on your view?

CHAPTER 2.439.

~

Steve3007 on  Friday, October 2, 2020 at 3:13 PM

Terrapin Station wrote: Wait--so first, you know that GE Morton explicitly gave two different senses of the term "physical," right?

More recently, to GE Morton:

Yet you use "physical" somewhere between the colloquial "tangible/visible with the naked eye" etc. and "addressed by the scientific discipline of physics"

So those are the two different senses you were referring to? Don't you think the latter can be seen as a more formal and structured version of the former? Particularly if we broaden "physics" to something like "the physical sciences".

CHAPTER 2.440.

~



2.439. by Steve3007

So those are the two different senses you were referring to?

Yes. He explicitly stated them in an earlier post. (And why didn't you ask when I first mentioned it?)

Don't you think the latter can be seen as a more formal and structured version of the former?

Not really. The former is kind of a "medium-sized dry goods (that I can interact with)" idea, which isn't really what physics is about. The colloquial notion is probably related to the scientific discipline in some way, but it would be a serious misunderstanding of it.

CHAPTER 2.441.

~

2.436. by Gertie

OK, here are the problems as I see them then.

As you agree neural correlation holds, then you're still stuck with the Hard Problem. Positing that experience is some kind of 'field' science can't account for, has no more explanatory value than positing it is some kind of 'perspective', or any other monist substance materialist 'What If'.

Consciousness is not a field; but it is somewhat analogous to one, inasmuch as it is an intangible, invisible effect of a physical process. But an EM field is an hypothetical construct, invented by us to explain certain empirically observable phenomena, while conscious phenomena are directly apprehensible --- but only by the experiencing agent.

And I think we've covered the Hard Problem. That problem is "hard" because it involves private phenomena not accessible to third parties, which renders scientific method useless for characterizing and analyzing them. We'll never be able to "account for" those phenomena analytically, i.e., reductively, which would allow us to predict the particular qualities of those phenomena from a known state of the physical system producing them. But we can predict that physical systems of a certain design will manifest those effects --- *insofar* as the behavior of the system indicates their presence. That is as much explanation as we're ever going to get.

You're still stuck with addressing Over Determinism too, like all monist materialist positions. If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.

The problem with that position is that experiential states are --- obviously --- not redundant. They instigate most human behavior. Did not a desire on your part instigate your above comments? That certain brain states were also involved is a theory, a conceptual construct, which is another phenomenal artifact. That argument against epiphenomenalism rests on an assumption that phenomenal states and events imply the existence of another kind of "basic stuff" which, not being reducible to physical "stuff," cannot affect it, and is thus superfluous. But that implication is gratuitous; the subjectivity of phenomenal effects does not entail that they must be of a different kind of non-physical "stuff." They are just a different kind of effect. That they are only produced (as far as we know) by physical systems is ample warrant for considering them physical effects.

Nor do those effects arise independently from the physical systems producing them, any more than the negative charge on an electron arises separately from the electron. So they don't need an independent evolutionary justification. All that needs to be justified in evolutionary terms is the system as a whole, and the evidence is pretty strong that those effects confer some survival and reproductive utility on systems that manifest them.

You have an additional problem not just with explaining the generation of the 'experiential field', but with the way this field feeds back info/instructions to the physical brain systems.

Again, you seem to be considering a reductive explanation to be the only acceptable type of explanation. But for the reasons given that is impossible. So we either settle for another explanatory avenue that is empirically testable, or we retreat to magic.

And we'd expect to be able to locate the homunculus brain system which activates any time a person is conscious, with neural connections centring there.

That is premature. I agree there must be some brain subsystem corresponding to the "homunculus," but how that system is distributed/constituted is unknown (at least by me).

Testing - there is no way to test your preferred 'What If' against others.

But there is. We can try to construct artificial systems designed as suggested by the theory and observe whether they behave in ways that convince us that they are conscious --- behaviors that we take to signify consciousness in people and other animals.

CHAPTER 2.442.

~

Steve3007 on  Friday, October 2, 2020 at 8:40 PM

Terrapin Station wrote:Not really. The former is kind of a "medium-sized dry goods (that I can interact with)" idea, which isn't really what physics is about.

I don't know what you mean by that.

The colloquial notion is probably related to the scientific discipline in some way, but it would be a serious misunderstanding of it.

OK. I disagree,

CHAPTER 2.443.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, October 2, 2020 at 11:24 PM



2.442. by Steve3007

Terrapin Station wrote: Not really. The former is kind of a "medium-sized dry goods (that I can interact with)" idea, which isn't really what physics is about.

I don't know what you mean by that.

The colloquial notion is probably related to the scientific discipline in some way, but it would be a serious misunderstanding of it.

OK. I disagree,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry_goods

Physics posits many things that are not tangible, visible, etc. in the colloquial sense. It in no way hinges on the colloquial tangibility idea.

CHAPTER 2.444.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 1:52 AM

2.443. by Terrapin Station

Physics posits many things that are not tangible, visible, etc. in the colloquial sense. It in no way hinges on the colloquial tangibility idea.

"Tangible" in the colloquial sense is to be understood as "detectable by the senses." E.g., air is tangible. Physics extends that to "detectable by some empirical method," such as with instruments. But it also postulates entities not detectable by any method, e.g., gluons, superstrings, virtual particles, etc., all of which are nonetheless "physical entities."

CHAPTER 2.445.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 6:59 AM

air is tangible

How much more surreal can this discussion get?

CHAPTER 2.446.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 7:15 AM

GE Morton wrote: "Tangible" in the colloquial sense is to be understood as "detectable by the senses." E.g., air is tangible. Physics extends that to "detectable by some empirical method," such as with instruments.

Yes. Physics is a formalization of what we do every day: making sense of the world, in such a way as to be able to create models of what it's going to do next, by observing it. i.e. by the use of sensory equipment connected to recording equipment and apparatus for analyzing the recorded data to look for patterns. That could mean just eyes and a brain or it could mean a whole range of other equipment.

But it also postulates entities not detectable by any method, e.g., gluons, superstrings, virtual particles, etc., all of which are nonetheless "physical entities."

Well, this is where the question starts as to what it is that physics (and, analogously, everyday working-stuff-out experience) proposes to exist extra-mentally, in the real world, and what it creates as an abstract model in order to try to describe and predict those things which exist extra-mentally.

You list some entities that you say are not detectable by any method. But clearly, in order to propose their existence, physicists must be proposing a system, into which those entities are proposed to fit, whose verification or falsification depends on empirical observation. If you say that these proposed entities are not detectable by any method, what exactly does it mean to detect something? What entities do you regard as detectable and why?

If a physicist notices a beam of green light in a cathode ray tube, he's apt to say that he's detected electrons flowing between the cathode and the anode. Has he? Or has he just detected glowing green gas? Similarly if he sees a line of ionized gas particles in a cloud chamber, designed to detect ionizing radiation. Can the electron, or the ionizing radiation, be said to exist or is it part of a mental model that we create in order to describe and predict the behaviours of things that we've decided *do* exist? Does it actually matter?

CHAPTER 2.447.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 12:56 PM

GE

OK, here are the problems as I see them then.

As you agree neural correlation holds, then you're still stuck with the Hard Problem. Positing that experience is some kind of 'field' science can't account for, has no more explanatory value than positing it is some kind of 'perspective', or any other monist substance materialist 'What If'.

Consciousness is not a field; but it is somewhat analogous to one, inasmuch as it is an intangible, invisible effect of a physical process. But an EM field is an hypothetical construct, invented by us to explain certain empirically observable phenomena, while conscious phenomena are directly apprehensible --- but only by the experiencing agent.

And I think we've covered the Hard Problem. That problem is "hard" because it involves private phenomena not accessible to third parties, which renders scientific method useless for characterizing and analyzing them. We'll never be able to "account for" those phenomena analytically, i.e., reductively, which would allow us to predict the particular qualities of those phenomena from a known state of the physical system producing them. But we can predict that physical systems of a certain design will manifest those effects --- insofar as the behavior of the system indicates their presence. That is as much explanation as we're ever going to get.

As I said your What If is still stuck with the Hard Problem. If that is as much explanation as we're ever going to get, then accept the consequences. Your 'predictions' are just guesses. And the results are not reliably testable. And even if they were you couldn't know if your What If is the reason the guessed prediction is correct.

You're still stuck with addressing Over Determinism too, like all monist materialist positions. If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.

The problem with that position is that experiential states are --- obviously --- not redundant. They instigate most human behavior. Did not a desire on your part instigate your above comments? That certain brain states were also involved is a theory, a conceptual construct, which is another phenomenal artifact. That argument against epiphenomenalism rests on an assumption that phenomenal states and events imply the existence of another kind of "basic stuff" which, not being reducible to physical "stuff," cannot affect it, and is thus superfluous. But that implication is gratuitous; the subjectivity of phenomenal effects does not entail that they must be of a different kind of non-physical "stuff." They are just a different kind of effect. That they are only produced (as far as we know) by physical systems is ample warrant for considering them physical effects.

Nor do those effects arise independently from the physical systems producing them, any more than the negative charge on an electron arises separately from the electron. So they don't need an independent evolutionary justification. All that needs to be justified in evolutionary terms is the system as a whole, and the evidence is pretty strong that those effects confer some survival and reproductive utility on systems that manifest them.

You haven't answered the objection - If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.

You have an additional problem not just with explaining the generation of the 'experiential field', but with the way this field feeds back info/instructions to the physical brain systems.

Again, you seem to be considering a reductive explanation to be the only acceptable type of explanation. But for the reasons given that is impossible. So we either settle for another explanatory avenue that is empirically testable, or we retreat to magic.

Again, your preferred What If isn't reliably testable, because experience isn't third person observable, and you don't provide an explanation which gives us something which might be - like specific necessary and sufficient conditions. Copying something isn't explanatory. And while it might at least in principle (if it was reliably testable) rule out some What Ifs, it won't identify THE correct one.

And we'd expect to be able to locate the homunculus brain system which activates any time a person is conscious, with neural connections centring there.

That is premature. I agree there must be some brain subsystem corresponding to the "homunculus," but how that system is distributed/constituted is unknown (at least by me).

Then you're just defining whatever mechanism results in a sense of being an 'Experiencer-Self' in humans as a homunculus. This isn't how the term is used.

Testing - there is no way to test your preferred 'What If' against others.

But there is. We can try to construct artificial systems designed as suggested by the theory and observe whether they behave in ways that convince us that they are conscious --- behaviors that we take to signify consciousness in people and other animals.

If we constructed a machine we were convinced was experiencing based on similarity to humans, we wouldn't know what particular key aspect of similarity (nec and sufficient conditions) we'd captured. So we wouldn't know if it proved your What If, or Identity Theory or Panpsychism, or something we hadn't thought of.

So my objections remain. If you simply took the position that you accept them, but think your What If is the best bet because... this or that, I'd say fair enough. But you hand wave real problems the same way others with different preferences do. Fair play for actually having thought your position through and being able to defend it in detail, but there's really nothing wrong in saying We Don't Know, when we don't know.

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 4 8 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 12:59 PM

Steve

Can the electron, or the ionizing radiation, be said to exist or is it part of a mental model that we create in order to describe and predict the behaviours of things that we've decided do exist? Does it actually matter?

That's an interesting question.

CHAPTER 2.449.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 1:31 PM



2.444. by GE Morton

2.443. by Terrapin Station

Physics posits many things that are not tangible, visible, etc. in the colloquial sense. It in no way hinges on the colloquial tangibility idea.

"Tangible" in the colloquial sense is to be understood as "detectable by the senses." E.g., air is tangible. Physics extends that to "detectable by some empirical method," such as with instruments. But it also postulates entities not detectable by any method, e.g., gluons, superstrings, virtual particles, etc., all of which are nonetheless "physical entities."

So were you agreeing or disagreeing with me?

CHAPTER 2.450.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 1:33 PM



2.446. by Steve3007

Yes. Physics is a formalization of what we do every day: making sense of the world, in such a way as to be able to create models of what it's going to do next, by observing it. i.e. by the use of sensory equipment connected to recording equipment and apparatus for analyzing the recorded data to look for patterns. That could mean just eyes and a brain or it could mean a whole range of other equipment.

Not what "tangible" refers to in the colloquial "medium-sized-dry-goods-that-I-can-interact-with" sense.

CHAPTER 2.451.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 1:46 AM

You list some entities that you say are not detectable by any method. But clearly, in order to propose their existence, physicists must be proposing a system, into which those entities are proposed to fit, whose verification or falsification depends on empirical observation. If you say that these proposed entities are not detectable by any method, what exactly does it mean to detect something? What entities do you regard as detectable and why?

If a physicist notices a beam of green light in a cathode ray tube, he's apt to say that he's detected electrons flowing between the cathode and the anode. Has he? Or has he just detected glowing green gas? Similarly if he sees a line of ionized gas particles in a cloud chamber, designed to detect ionizing radiation. Can the electron, or the ionizing radiation, be said to exist or is it part of a mental model that we create in order to describe and predict the behaviours of things that we've decided do exist? Does it actually matter?

It only matters conceptually, philosophically. If a postulated entity (particle, field, force, etc.) allows us to reliably predict future experience, then it exists. That is the only criterion for the existence of anything, from the elm tree in my backyard to superstrings (not to mention all the myriad abstract entities and phenomena we talk about every day). They exist if postulating them allows us to anticipate future experience or communicate actionable information to someone.

Most ontologies are futile efforts to gain some sort of transcendental knowledge, to identify the "basic stuff" of the universe, on the assumption that there is some "way things really are." They presume to describe Kant's *noumenon*.

But practical ontology --- the "reality" we experience and talk about --- is dynamic and utilitarian. "To be is to be perceived" must be replaced with, "To be is to be useful."

If electrons enable us to predict what will happen --- what we will observe or otherwise experience --- when we apply a voltage to a cathode, then they exist. If gluons help us predict what will happen when we bombard a proton with electrons in a particle accelerator, then gluons exist. If the elm tree postulate allows me to predict that if I walk in a certain direction I will be impeded by an immovable object having a certain appearance, then the tree exists. Etc.

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 5 2 .

~

2.437. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.435. by GE Morton

Yes; Dennett et al would so claim.

Not just Dennett, but anyone committed to a non-dualist, non-supernatural model of consciousness, which you seemed to do when you earlier agreed that of course mental phenomena are just physical phenomena. Physical phenomena are only caused by other physical phenomena. There is no such thing as a mental event that is somehow physical but not a brain event.

Well, that is question-begging. Yes, mental events are caused by brain events. But that doesn't entail that they *are* brain events. You are assuming that brain events can only cause other brain events (or perhaps other "physical" events). The empirical evidence suggests otherwise --- namely, that some physical events can cause mental events. Which are "physical events" in the philosophical, theoretical sense, but not the colloquial sense (as discussed earlier).

If we can distinguish between a mental phenomenon (such as the sensation I experience when beholding a red square) and the activities of a group of neurons observable as EKG traces or under a microscope, then they are obviously not identical. All I can conclude is that there is a causal relation between them.

A. What everyone agrees exists and needs to be explained (mental phenomenon, subjective experience, whatever you want to call them). As you say, that these exist is something that no one can deny or wants to deny. Dennett, for instance, does not deny them and can only be characterized as having done so by deliberately ignoring his actual words.

Well, here are (some of) Dennett's own words:

"My claim, then, is not just that the various technical or theoretical concepts of qualia are vague or equivocal, but that the source concept, the 'pretheoretical' notion of which the former are presumed to be refinements, is so thoroughly confused that even if we undertook to salvage some 'lowest common denominator' from the theoreticians' proposals, any acceptable version would have to be so radically unlike the ill-formed notions that are commonly appealed to that it would be tactically obtuse--not to say Pickwickian--to cling to the term. *Far better, tactically, to declare that there simply are no qualia at all.* (Endnote 2).

Endnote 2: "The difference between '*eliminative materialism*'--of which my position on qualia is an *instance* [italics added] --and a "reductive" materialism that takes on the burden of identifying the problematic item in terms of the foundational materialistic theory is thus often best seen not so much as a doctrinal issue as a tactical issue: how might we most gracefully or effectively enlighten the confused in this instance?"

---Dennett, "Quining Qualia":

[https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p ... inqual.htm](https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/p...inqual.htm)

B. One's theoretical or ideological commitments to how the elements in A are best characterized and explained. One never establishes the reality of such commitments by claiming they cannot be denied. One establishes such commitments by making reasoned, evidence based arguments showing they are better than the alternatives.

Well, I agree. But the existence of qualia (and other mental phenomena) are not products or consequences of any theoretical or ideological commitments. Quite the contrary --- they are primal, the raw materials from which all theoretical speculations and postulated entities and processes, including brain states and neural processes, begins. We can only undertake analysis of an elm tree, or brains, if we have some percepts, comprised of some concatenation of qualia, that informs us of something in need of analysis. We can't "explain" qualia by denying them, or gratuitously identifying them with something from which they are easily distinguishable.

If mental events are physical events, which you earlier committed to, they can only be brain processes.

THAT, my friend, is a "theoretical or ideological commitment." A dogma, and an indefensible one.

There is literally no available alternative consistent with established cognitive neuroscience . . .

It is only inconsistent with a certain narrow construal of the scope of cognitive science.

Not even remotely, not by a zillion light years, is this statement true. Scientific theories are not logical theorems.

True. But they are mental phenomena.

CHAPTER 2.453.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 11:43 AM




2.452. by GE Morton

If we can distinguish between a mental phenomenon (such as the sensation I experience when beholding a red square) and the activities of a group of neurons observable as EKG traces or under a microscope, then they are obviously not identical. All I can conclude is that there is a causal relation between them.

Again, it's simply a perspectival difference. We distinguish between perspectival differences all the time without having difficulty realizing that they're perspectival differences of something identical. We shouldn't have such difficulty with it in this case.

CHAPTER 2.454.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 3:19 PM

2.453. by Terrapin Station

2.452. by GE Morton

If we can distinguish between a mental phenomenon (such as the sensation I experience when beholding a red square) and the activities of a group of neurons observable as EKG traces or under a microscope, then they are obviously not identical. All I can conclude is that there is a causal relation between them.

Again, it's simply a perspectival difference. We distinguish between perspectival differences all the time without having difficulty realizing that they're perspectival differences of something identical. We shouldn't have such difficulty with it in this case.

I think we've covered this. You can't attribute apparent differences between two percepts as "perspectival differences" unless you already know, or are assuming, that the two percepts are of the same thing. I.e., you can't use those differences to *argue for* their being the same thing. That explanation begs the question. Moreover, the appearance of a thing from a given perspective can always be transformed into the view from another perspective via a simple algorithm. That obviously can't be done with the percepts of a red square and an EKG record. Those two percepts have nothing in common.

CHAPTER 2.455.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 3:52 PM



2.454. by GE Morton

Moreover, the appearance of a thing from a given perspective can always be transformed into the view from another perspective via a simple algorithm.

Re this, which you've mentioned a number of times, can you give any aspect of any algorithm that amounts to any quality (property) in any manner?

CHAPTER 2.456.

~

Terrapin Station on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 3:54 PM



I should have clarified re the question above, I'm asking you to give me an example. Give me an example of an algorithm or even just an part of any algorithm that would amount to any quality (that is, any property that's not simply something like the "two" part of "two horns"). So list the algorithm or part of the algorithm and list the quality it's supposed to amount to.



GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 4:35 PM

2.456. by Terrapin Station

I should have clarified re the question above, I'm asking you to give me an example. Give me an example of an algorithm or even just an part of any algorithm that would amount to any quality (that is, any property that's not simply something like the "two" part of "two horns"). So list the algorithm or part of the algorithm and list the quality it's supposed to amount to.

"Algorithm that would amount to any quality"? I have no idea what you're asking. Algorithms don't "amount to qualities." They are mathematical operations to map one set of entities onto another set. We can transform the view from a given point of a given 3-dimensional object into the view from any other viewpoint by rotating the object through the three dimensions by amount in each dimension equal to the differences between the viewpoints. The properties of the object don't change in that process.

But we can't explain the apparent differences between, say, a mouse and an elephant as "differences in perspective." There is no algorithm that will map one onto the other without altering their properties.



Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 5:07 PM



2.457. by GE Morton

2.456. by Terrapin Station

I should have clarified re the question above, I'm asking you to give me an example. Give me an example of an algorithm or even just an part of any algorithm that would amount to any quality (that is, any property that's not simply something like the "two" part of "two horns"). So list the algorithm or part of the algorithm and list the quality it's supposed to amount to.

"Algorithm that would amount to any quality"? I have no idea what you're asking. Algorithms don't "amount to qualities." They are mathematical operations to map one set of entities onto another set. We can transform the view from a given point of a given 3-dimensional object into the view from any other viewpoint by rotating the object through the three dimensions by amount in each dimension equal to the differences between the viewpoints. The properties of the object don't change in that process.

But we can't explain the apparent differences between, say, a mouse and an elephant as "differences in perspective." There is no algorithm that will map one onto the other without altering their properties.

The topic is property differences due to perspectival differences. Are you or are you not claiming that algorithms can somehow translate to these property differences due to perspectival differences?

CHAPTER 2.459.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 5:38 PM

2.458. by Terrapin Station

The topic is property differences due to perspectival differences. Are you or are you not claiming that algorithms can somehow translate to these property differences due to perspectival differences?

The properties of the object viewed do not change with changes in perspective. They are constant throughout all changes in viewpoint. If the apparent properties of one object cannot be transformed into the apparent properties from another viewpoint with a simple algorithm then the percepts are of different objects, not one object viewed from different perspectives.

CHAPTER 2.460.

~

Faustus5 on  Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 7:22 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.452. by GE Morton

Well, that is question-begging. Yes, mental events are caused by brain events. But that doesn't entail that they are brain events. You are assuming that brain events can only cause other brain events (or perhaps other "physical" events).

That is not an assumption, it is me paying strict attention to the evidence that actually exists without unjustified spin.

2.452. by GE Morton

E Morton" post_id=368664 time=1601780659 user_id=47101]The empirical evidence suggests otherwise --- namely, that some physical events can cause mental events.

There is no evidence whatsoever that brain events cause further physical events that are mental events but not brain events. If I am wrong, please cite an example from the peer reviewed scientific literature.

2.452. by GE Morton

If we can distinguish between a mental phenomenon (such as the sensation I experience when beholding a red square) and the activities of a group of neurons observable as EKG traces or under a microscope, then they are obviously not identical.

It is not obvious at all that they are not identical, otherwise there would not be an abundance of scientists and philosophers who do think they are, in fact, identical. Talk about ACTUAL question begging, here.

2.452. by GE Morton

All I can conclude is that there is a causal relation between them.

Then you should embrace the dualism that is fundamentally at the heart of the way you see consciousness, and stop trying to deny it. There is no documented case anywhere of brain events causing anything other than other brain or nervous system events. You can't call mental events physical events (but not brain events) unless you can point to exactly what measurable particles carry them that aren't part of the brain. They can't be physical if they are not addressed or addressable by physics.

2.452. by GE Morton

Well, here are (some of) Dennett's own words. . . .

You're doing exactly what all dishonest scholars of his work do -- cherry picking what looks convenient and ignoring what goes directly against the misrepresentation you are trying to push. Very early on in one of the papers you cite ("Quining Qualia"), he says, in plain English:

"Everything real has properties, and since I don't deny the reality of conscious experience, I grant that conscious experience has properties. "

So there you go. He believes in the reality of conscious experiences, he just thinks the way folks like you theorize about them is misguided.

2.452. by GE Morton

But the existence of qualia (and other mental phenomena) are not products or consequences of any theoretical or ideological commitments.

That is exactly what qualia are. Otherwise, there would not be philosophers and scientists who deny that they exist while being perfectly happy to acknowledge that mental states are real. You don't get to assume your side has won the debate until the debate is over, and that will only happen when there is a consensus in the community that qualia are real and not an ideological invention. That will never happen if the best you can do is just stamp your feet and insist they are "obviously" real.

2.452. by GE Morton

THAT, my friend, is a "theoretical or ideological commitment." A dogma, and an indefensible one.

If it is dogma to insist on sticking to what has actually been measured and verified in mainstream cognitive science, then you've just made "dogma" into a scientific virtue I'm more than happy to embrace.

2.452. by GE Morton

It is only inconsistent with a certain narrow construal of the scope of cognitive science.

Feel free be the revolutionary pioneer who transforms what cognitive science is. Step one: find out a way to articulate how mental event can be a physical state that is not also a brain state and then verify it experimentally. Good luck with that!

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 6 1 .

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 8:08 PM



2.459. by GE Morton

2.458. by Terrapin Station

The topic is property differences due to perspectival differences. Are you or are you not claiming that algorithms can somehow translate to these property differences due to perspectival differences? The properties of the object viewed do not change with changes in perspective. They are constant throughout all changes in viewpoint. If the apparent properties of one object cannot be transformed into the apparent properties from another viewpoint with a simple algorithm then the percepts are of different objects, not one object viewed from different perspectives.

And the example of an algorithm capturing any property?

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 6 2 .

~

Gertie on 🕒 Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 9:55 PM

Faustus

You say phenomenal experience/mental states are real, but qualia aren't.

So can you explain what mental states you believe are real. and why?

And how Dennett would answer the same question?

Simply and clearly, avoiding ambiguity as much as possible.

GE Morton on 🕒 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 12:02 AM

2.447. by Gertie

As I said your What If is still stuck with the Hard Problem. If that is as much explanation as we're ever going to get, then accept the consequences. Your 'predictions' are just guesses. And the results are not reliably testable. And even if they were you couldn't know if your What If is the reason the guessed prediction is correct.

Well, all predictions can be called "guesses," I suppose. But there are good guesses and bad ones. What distinguishes them is that the former are confirmed by observation. And they are reliably testable --- either the system displays the predicted behaviors or it doesn't. If it does, then the prediction was correct, and for the reasons set forth in the theory, at least until another theory comes along, offering different reasons, that makes even more correct predictions. There is no way to assess the "correctness" of any theory other than the reliability of the predictions it makes.

The problem with that position is that experiential states are --- obviously --- not redundant. They instigate most human behavior. Did not a desire on your part instigate your above comments? That certain brain states were also involved is a theory, a conceptual construct, which is another phenomenal artifact. That argument against epiphenomenalism rests on an assumption that phenomenal states and events imply the existence of another kind of "basic stuff" which, not being reducible to physical "stuff," cannot affect it, and is thus superfluous. But that implication is gratuitous; the subjectivity of phenomenal effects does not entail that they must be of a different kind of non-physical "stuff." They are just a different kind of effect. That they are only produced (as far as we know) by physical systems is ample warrant for considering them physical effects.

Nor do those effects arise independently from the physical systems producing them, any more than the negative charge on an electron arises separately from the electron. So they don't need an independent evolutionary justification. All that needs to be justified in evolutionary terms is the system as a whole, and the evidence is pretty strong that those effects confer some survival and reproductive utility on systems that manifest them.

You haven't answered the objection - If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.

The above quote does answer that, Gertie. There doesn't need to be any evolutionary pressure for experiential states to "arise." There only needs to be evolutionary pressure for systems to arise which have survival advantages. Certain kinds of systems happened to have that property, which proved to confer some survival advantage. That is true of all traits which confer some survival advantage. Various traits appear in populations at random, for physical reasons. Some confer survival advantages in a given environment, some disadvantages, some neither. Cheetahs, almost alone among cats, don't have retractable claws. There was no evolutionary pressure for that trait to appear in some ancestor population. But it did appear, due to some random genetic variant, and

happened to confer an advantage on cats in a certain environmental milieu (in other environments it would be a disadvantage). Biological traits appear at random, due to some random alteration in a DNA sequence somewhere. Whether a trait confers a survival advantage can only be assessed after it appears. There is no "pressure" for any particular trait to arise.

Again, your preferred What If isn't reliably testable, because experience isn't third person observable, and you don't provide an explanation which gives us something which might be – like specific necessary and sufficient conditions. Copying something isn't explanatory. And while it might at least in principle (if it was reliably testable) rule out some What Ifs, it won't identify THE correct one.

THE correct one?

I've given you a methodology for determining whether an hypothesis, or theory, is "correct." You can't speak of "THE correct one," unless you have some methodology in mind for discovering it. The correct theory or explanation will always be, and can only be, the one which generates the most most reliable predictions. Asking how things "really are" in some transcendental sense, "from God's point of view," is a vacuous exercise. Meaningless.

No, I can't give the specific necessary and sufficient conditions for a physical system to manifest consciousness. We know that they exist, however, since we have physical systems that do manifest that property. Whether we can fully elucidate them remains to be seen; we will know when we have succeeded when we have constructed a system whose behavior warrants calling it "conscious." We'll then impute phenomenal states to it, just as we do when we deem certain animals (and other humans) to be conscious.

Then you're just defining whatever mechanism results in a sense of being an 'Experiencer-Self' in humans as a homunculus. This isn't how the term is used.

How do you think it is used? How do you understand it?

If we constructed a machine we were convinced was experiencing based on similarity to humans, we wouldn't know what particular key aspect of similarity (nec and sufficient conditions) we'd captured. So we wouldn't know if it proved your What If, or Identity Theory or Panpsychism, or something we hadn't thought of.

Behaviors we deem sufficient for imputing consciousness to other humans IS the sufficient condition, the only one we have, being unable (as third parties) to observe those internal states directly. That is the only similarity empirically accessible. We can't ask whether the machine's experiences are similar to ours; I can't even ask whether your phenomenal experiences are similar to mine. Those are unanswerable questions.

Fair play for actually having thought your position through and being able to defend it in detail, but there's really nothing wrong in saying We Don't Know, when we don't know.

I'm saying more than that --- not only do we not know precisely how phenomenal states are generated by physical systems, or whether a machine's (imputed) phenomenal states, or yours, are similar to mine, we can never know that --- because those states are not available for analysis by scientific methods and are not derivable from known scientific laws. They are, however, found only in connection with certain physical systems, which warrants considering them physical effects. We

can rule out identity theories because phenomenal states are obviously not identical to brain states, per the common definitions of "identical." We can rule out panpsychism on Popperian grounds -- - because it imputes a property to things which is in principle unconfirmable and unfalsifiable, to things which exhibit no behaviors that warrant imputing that property, and those behaviors are the only warrant we have for imputing it to anything.

CHAPTER 2.464.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 1:46 AM

2.461. by Terrapin Station

And the example of an algorithm capturing any property?

I have no idea what you mean by an algorithm "capturing a property." They don't "capture" anything. An algorithm is a systematic method of transforming one set of apparent properties into a another set of apparent properties, particularly shapes and other apparent spatio-temporal properties.

CHAPTER 2.465.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 8:34 AM

2.463. by GE Morton

2.447. by Gertie

As I said your What If is still stuck with the Hard Problem. If that is as much explanation as we're ever going to get, then accept the consequences. Your 'predictions' are just guesses. And the results are not reliably testable. And even if they were you couldn't know if your What If is the reason the guessed prediction is correct.

Well, all predictions can be called "guesses," I suppose. But there are good guesses and bad ones. What distinguishes them is that the former are confirmed by observation. And they are reliably testable --- either the system displays the predicted behaviors or it doesn't. If it does, then the prediction was correct, and for the reasons set forth in the theory, at least until another theory comes along, offering different reasons, that makes even more correct predictions. There is no way to assess the "correctness" of any theory other than the reliability of the predictions it makes.

*You haven't answered the objection - **If neural correlation holds, and neurons are affected by physical causality just like any other physical stuff, then experiential states are redundant, and there would be no evolutionary pressure for them to arise. When in reality, they look honed for evolutionary utility.***

The above quote does answer that, Gertie. There doesn't need to be any evolutionary pressure for experiential states to "arise." There only needs to be evolutionary pressure for systems to arise which have survival advantages. Certain kinds of systems happened to have that property, which proved to confer some survival advantage. That is true of all traits which confer some survival advantage. Various traits appear in populations at random, for physical reasons. Some confer survival advantages in a given environment, some disadvantages, some neither. Cheetahs, almost alone among cats, don't have retractable claws. There was no evolutionary pressure for that trait to appear in some ancestor population. But it did appear, due to some random genetic variant, and happened to confer an advantage on cats in a certain environmental milieu (in other environments it would be a disadvantage). Biological traits appear at random, due to some random alteration in a DNA sequence somewhere. Whether a trait confers a survival advantage can only be assessed after it appears. There is no "pressure" for any particular trait to arise.

Again, your preferred What If isn't reliably testable, because experience isn't third person observable, and you don't provide an explanation which gives us something which might be - like specific necessary and sufficient conditions. Copying something isn't explanatory. And while it might at least in principle (if it was reliably testable) rule out some What Ifs, it won't identify THE correct one.

THE correct one?

I've given you a methodology for determining whether an hypothesis, or theory, is "correct." You can't speak of "THE correct one," unless you have some methodology in mind for discovering it. The correct theory or explanation will always be, and can only be, the one which generates the most most reliable predictions. Asking how things "really are" in some transcendental sense, "from God's point of view," is a vacuous exercise. Meaningless.

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then impute phenomenal states to it, just as we do when we deem certain animals (and other humans) to be conscious.

Then you're just defining whatever mechanism results in a sense of being an 'Experiencer-Self' in humans as a homunculus. This isn't how the term is used.

How do you think it is used? How do you understand it?

If we constructed a machine we were convinced was experiencing based on similarity to humans, we wouldn't know what particular key aspect of similarity (nec and sufficient conditions) we'd captured. So we wouldn't know if it proved your What If, or Identity Theory or Panpsychism, or something we hadn't thought of.

Behaviors we deem sufficient for imputing consciousness to other humans IS the sufficient condition, the only one we have, being unable (as third parties) to observe those internal states directly. That is the only similarity empirically accessible. We can't ask whether the machine's experiences are similar to ours; I can't even ask whether your phenomenal experiences are similar to mine. Those are unanswerable questions.


Fair play for actually having thought your position through and being able to defend it in detail, but there's really nothing wrong in saying We Don't Know, when we don't know.

I'm saying more than that --- not only do we not know precisely how phenomenal states are generated by physical systems, or whether a machine's (imputed) phenomenal states, or yours, are similar to mine, we can never know that --- because those states are not available for analysis by scientific methods and are not derivable from known scientific laws. They are, however, found only in connection with certain physical systems, which warrants considering them physical effects. We can rule out identity theories because phenomenal states are obviously not identical to brain states, per the common definitions of "identical." We can rule out panpsychism on Popperian grounds --- because it imputes a property to things which is in principle unconfirmable and unfalsifiable, to things which exhibit no behaviors that warrant imputing that property, and those behaviors are the only warrant we have for imputing it to anything.

We're not going to agree on these points so I'll leave it there. Your What If might be right, but there are good reasons that there's no consensus on a Theory of Consciousness, no matter how convinced people are that their contradictory preferences are the obvious answer.

CHAPTER 2.466.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 8:43 AM

Terrapin Station wrote:Not what "tangible" refers to in the colloquial "medium-sized-dry-goods-that-I-can-interact-with" sense.

I'll guess that when you keep talking about "medium sized dry goods", you mean phenomena that occur on human scales of distance and time and which are detected directly without the use of apparatus other than those we already have. I think the distinction between that and other phenomena is irrelevant for the purpose of defining "physical", which was what this was about. There are plenty of "medium sized dry goods" that physics deals with and has dealt with.

I'm still interested in this:

[viewtopic.php?p=367478#p367478](#)

[viewtopic.php?p=367744#p367744](#)

[viewtopic.php?p=367764#p367764](#)

[viewtopic.php?p=367770#p367770](#)

[viewtopic.php?p=367801#p367801](#)

[viewtopic.php?p=367823#p367823](#)

You said you define physical simply to mean the same thing as matter and its associated relations and processes. I pointed out that that simply shifts the issue onto providing a useful definition of "material". Your answer was the rhetorical question beginning:

Is the idea here that we're dealing with someone who has no grasp at all re what "physical" might refer to, so we need to find a synonymous phrase that they might have a grasp of, where we are dealing with someone who also has no grasp of what "material," "relations" etc. refers to?


As I said, it appears to me that your answer is that it should be obvious to anyone with any life experience what words like "physical" and "material" refer to. So I'll ask again:

How have they gained a grasp of what those terms refer to?

By a lifetime of sensory experiences and processing those experiences, yes?

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 6 7 .

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 9:29 AM

GE Morton wrote: It only matters conceptually, philosophically. If a postulated entity (particle, field, force, etc.) allows us to reliably predict future experience, then it exists. That is the only criterion for the existence of anything, from the elm tree in my backyard to superstrings (not to mention all the myriad abstract entities and phenomena we talk about every day). They exist if postulating them allows us to anticipate future experience or communicate actionable information to someone.

Yes, I essentially agree with this definition of existence. I think one thing that it reminds us is that the entities we regard as existing can change as a result of new experiences/sensations/experiments. Clearly this has in fact happened over time. For example, it was once thought that there was an existent substance called "caloric", which flowed through bodies and which was responsible for heat conduction. The luminiferous aether is another well known example.

Most ontologies are futile efforts to gain some sort of transcendental knowledge, to identify the "basic stuff" of the universe, on the assumption that there is some "way things really are." They presume to describe Kant's noumenon.

It appears to me, on evidence so far, that this is a problem that Terrapin Station has: the desire to construct an ontology without acknowledging the sensory experiences that are used to decide

which things to include in that ontology. Personally, I have no problem with people saying that there is a "way things really are", but it becomes a problem when they seem to disconnect that from "the way things appear to be" and think that anyone who acknowledges that connection is guilty of thinking that "everything is about epistemology" or "everything is about us".

But practical ontology --- the "reality" we experience and talk about --- is dynamic and utilitarian. "To be is to be perceived" must be replaced with, "To be is to be useful."

I agree, but I think that in saying "to be is to be useful" you will be accused of thinking that "everything is about us".

The question that then follows is the old one about whether the laws of physics (and the everyday regularities that we notice as a result of living in the world and which we use to get through the day, of which the laws of physics are more formal versions) are created or discovered. Those who prefer to think that there is a "way things really are" will presumably tend to prefer the story that there is a real set of regularities towards which the laws of physics we create are striving. They will presumably tend to think that regardless of which things (such as electrons and elm trees) we find it useful to see as existing on current empirical evidence, there is an objective answer to the question of what really exists towards which we are also striving.

CHAPTER 2.468.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 11:45 AM

Steve3007 wrote: I'll guess that when you keep talking about "medium sized dry goods", you mean phenomena that occur on human scales of distance and time and which are detected directly without the use of apparatus other than those we already have.

OK, yes, it's an expression apparently used by J. L. Austin to just mean familiar objects. Fine.

CHAPTER 2.469.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 12:34 PM



2.464. by GE Morton

2.461. by Terrapin Station

And the example of an algorithm capturing any property?

I have no idea what you mean by an algorithm "capturing a property." They don't "capture" anything. An algorithm is a systematic method of transforming one set of apparent properties into a another set of apparent properties, particularly shapes and other apparent spatio-temporal properties.

Let's try it this way: give an example of how an algorithm correlates with any property. Surely if an algorithm is transforming apparent properties, it has some correlation to them, right? So give an example of an algorithm or a part of one, an example of a property, and explain how the algorithm correlates with the property in your example.

CHAPTER 2.470.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 12:44 PM



2.466. by Steve3007

I'll guess that when you keep talking about "medium sized dry goods", you mean phenomena that occur on human scales of distance and time and which are detected directly without the use of apparatus other than those we already have. I think the distinction between that and other phenomena is irrelevant for the purpose of defining "physical", which was what this was about.

It's not irrelevant to the *colloquial* sense of "tangible".

Re the other stuff, it's trying to talk about too many different things at the same time.

There's the issue of the two definitions that GE Morton brought up, where I'm criticizing those two particular definitions in the context of what is commonly being referred to by "physicalism" in philosophy.

Then there's the issue of how I'd define the term "physicalism" in *counterdistinction* to the two definitions that GE Morton brought up. That comment isn't meant to define the term for someone who is possibly going to have a problem with all sorts of terms. It's simply meant to be in counterdistinction to the two definitions provided, so that one would know what I'm referring to, as opposed to the other suggested definitions.

Then there was the issue whether any definitions can be noncircular, and the issue of whether we can do ostensive definitions online, and so on.

We can't talk about all of those things at the same time, and at this point, I'm not sure why we're still talking about any of them (especially where we'd be talking about any of them in the vein of not even having started a discussion about any of them, so we'd need to rehash stuff already said.)

Which one do you want to focus on first, and why?

CHAPTER 2.471.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 1:15 PM

Terrapin Station wrote:Which one do you want to focus on first...

The one that ended here:

<viewtopic.php?p=367823#p367823>

As I've said, your definition of "physical" as "relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials" doesn't advance the cause of providing a useful definition of "physical". It just makes it a task of providing a useful definition of "material". When I pointed that out, your response was essentially "everyone knows what 'physical' and 'material' mean!". Yet you refused to go further by talking about the obvious reason *why* everyone knows that.

Terrapin Station wrote:...and why?

Because I find it odd that you won't simply acknowledge the obvious truth that the reason why everyone knows what those words mean is because their definitions are learnt from a lifetime of sensory experiences and analysis of the patterns in those experiences. Even more odd that you seem to see that proposition as to the way that those words are understood as amounting to "everything is about epistemology" or "everything is about us".

CHAPTER 2.472.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 4:47 PM



2.471. by Steve3007

Terrapin Station wrote:Which one do you want to focus on first...

The one that ended here:

<viewtopic.php?p=367823#p367823>

*As I've said, your definition of "physical" as "relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials" doesn't advance the cause of providing a useful definition of "physical". It just makes it a task of providing a useful definition of "material". When I pointed that out, your response was essentially "everyone knows what 'physical' and 'material' mean!". Yet you refused to go further by talking about the obvious reason *why* everyone knows that.*

Terrapin Station wrote:...and why?

Because I find it odd that you won't simply acknowledge the obvious truth that the reason why everyone knows what those words mean is because their definitions are learnt from a lifetime of sensory experiences and analysis of the patterns in those experiences. Even more odd that you seem to see that proposition as to the way that those words are understood as amounting to "everything is about epistemology" or "everything is about us".

Re the last part, I wasn't disagreeing with that. My issue was that when I gave my definition (which again was just to exemplify the different way I was using the term compared to the definitions GE Moore gave), I had an objection that it was circular, but ALL definitions are circular, otherwise they're not definitions. I wasn't disagreeing that a major way we pick up words is via ostension. Nevertheless if an ostension is providing a *definition*, it's circular, or it's not actually a definition.

Re the definition in general, we're defining the term for what audience? What are they familiar with?

I'm asking because I'm not about to start playing the game where you say, "X is defined as y z." And then someone goes, "What is y?" And you go, "Y is a b," and they go, "What is b?" ad infinitum. I'm not interested in that game. So if we're defining something where part of the definition refers to material, I want to know the background of an audience who isn't familiar with what "material" refers to. That would make those people very unusual or deficient in some way. So I need to know what sort of audience it is--aliens? People with learning disabilities? What?

CHAPTER 2.473.

~

Terrapin Station on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 5:01 PM



Note again that I was not saying that the other definitions weren't useful, or that they weren't clear or anything like that.

What I said was that (a) they're not the conventional way to use the term "physical(ism)" in philosophy, and (b) they're not the definition that I personally use.

Note that I also wasn't saying the definition I personally use is the conventional way to use the term "physical(ism)" in philosophy.

Responses arguing about whether my definition is "useful" and/or arguing that someone doesn't know what it's referring to suggest problems with the complainant. So to address that, I need to figure out just what the problems are with the complainant that would make them have issues understanding something so simple.

CHAPTER 2.474.

~


Terrapin Station on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 5:03 PM



(Same thing for responses that suggest that the complainant is unaware that all definitions are circular, otherwise they're not definitions, by the way.)

CHAPTER 2.475.

~

GE Morton on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 5:44 PM

2.469. by Terrapin Station

2.464. by GE Morton

I have no idea what you mean by an algorithm "capturing a property." They don't "capture" anything. An algorithm is a systematic method of transforming one set of apparent properties into another set of apparent properties, particularly shapes and other apparent spatio-temporal properties.

Let's try it this way: give an example of how an algorithm correlates with any property.

Do you know what an algorithm is? No, it does not correlate with any properties, any more than it "captures" any properties.


Surely if an algorithm is transforming apparent properties, it has some correlation to them, right?

No. It is a transformation of a reference frame, or of some 3D object within that frame (which operations are equivalent). The *apparent* properties of the thing --- what is visible from a given viewpoint --- will change accordingly. But the properties of the thing(s) viewed don't change.

The apparent properties of a cat viewed from the front will differ from those viewed from the back. But the cat's properties don't change with that change in viewpoint. We can transform the former view into the latter by rotating the cat 180 degrees. The apparent properties of a mouse viewed from the front will also differ from those of a cat viewed from the front. But we can't transform the latter into the former by rotating either the cat or the mouse 180 degrees, or by any other amount. The former is a difference in perspective; the latter is not.

CHAPTER 2.476.

~

Steve3007 on  Monday, October 5, 2020 at 6:24 PM

Terrapin Station wrote: Re the definition in general, we're defining the term for what audience? What are they familiar with?

They're a regular human being who has lived for several decades, speaks English and has no learning difficulties, but happens not to know exactly what you mean by the word "material" (perhaps they're a Madonna fan). They ask you "What do you mean by physical?". You say "I mean materials, relations of materials and processes (dynamic relations) of materials".

How do you explain what you mean by "material"?

I'd say something that would amount to: "All the stuff that you can see around you and that any number of others you ask can also see, if they look."

Would you say something radically different than that?

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 3:29 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🗨️ Evidence [here](#).

2.462. by Gertie

Faustus

You say phenomenal experience/mental states are real, but qualia aren't.

So can you explain what mental states you believe are real. and why?

And how Dennett would answer the same question?

Simply and clearly, avoiding ambiguity as much as possible.

"What mental states are real?" Um. . .all of them? (You can't literally be asking that question, so maybe I'm just being an idiot.)

I mean, unless you're dealing with a crazy person, any mental state they say they have is going to be real. I'll even grant that some mental states can be both unconscious and real if they have measurable impacts on behaviors. And some can be implicit.

What Dennett and I are saying is that qualia are not real, and that qualia are a bad theoretical flourish that is unnecessary, not that there are mental states that don't exist. You can cheerfully say that people have conscious experiences, even that they have something we would allow were usefully called "raw feels," without all the theoretical baggage that philosophers of mind have saddled these concepts with.

One test I use is whether you accept the plausibility of a David Chalmers zombie. If you reject it, you can probably reject qualia, too. But to accept the plausibility of a Chalmers zombie means you accept qualia in some form or other.

Now, if you want a solid answer on what Dennett (and I) think conscious experiences actually are, you can either read *Consciousness Explained*, or the very good paper "Are We Explaining Consciousness Yet?" published in a fantastic special edition of COGNITION along with several other papers.

It covers, from a philosophical angle, the growing consensus model of consciousness in cognitive neuroscience called the Global Neuronal Workspace. (This model, neurologically, is pretty much what *Consciousness Explained* spelled out philosophically ten years before this paper was published.)

The GNW can be summarized as follows, from a paper by Dehaene and Naccache in the same volume, with numbered footnotes Dennett addresses later:

At any given time, many modular (1) cerebral networks are active in parallel and process information in an unconscious manner. An information (2) becomes conscious, however, if the neural population that represents it is mobilized by top-down (3) attentional amplification into a brain-scale state of coherent activity that involves many neurons distributed throughout the brain. The long distance connectivity of these "workplace neurons" can, when they are active for a minimal duration (4), make the information available to a variety of processes including perceptual categorization, long-term memorization, evaluation, and intentional action. We postulate that this global availability of information through the workplace is (5) what we subjectively experience as a conscious state.

Dennett's elaborations to the above go as follows:

(1) Modularity comes in degrees and kinds; what is being stressed here is only that these are specialist networks with limited powers of information processing.

(2) There is no standard term for an event in the brain that carries information or content on some topic (e.g., information about color at a retinal location, information about a phoneme heard, information about the familiarity or novelty of other information currently being carried, etc.). Whenever some specialist network or smaller structure makes a discrimination, fixes some element of content, "an information" in their sense comes into existence. "Signal," "content-fixation," (Dennett, 1991), "micro-taking," (Dennett and Kinsbourne, 1992) "wordless narrative" (Damasio 1999), and "representation" (Jack and Shallice) are among the near-synonyms in use.

(3) We should be careful not to take the term "top-down" too literally. Since there is no single organizational summit to the brain, it means only that such attentional amplification is not just modulated "bottom-up" by features internal to the processing stream in which it rides, but also by sideways influences, from competitive, cooperative, collateral activities whose emergent net result is what we may lump together and call top-down influence. In an arena of opponent processes (as in a democracy) the "top" is distributed, not localized. Nevertheless, among the various competitive processes, there are important bifurcations or thresholds that can lead to strikingly different sequels, and it is these differences that best account for our pretheoretical intuitions about the difference between conscious and unconscious events in the mind. If we are careful, we can use "top-down" as an innocent allusion, exploiting a vivid fossil trace of a discarded Cartesian theory to mark the real differences that that theory misdescribed. (This will be elaborated in my discussion of Jack and Shallice below.)

(4) How long must this minimal duration be? Long enough to make the information available to a variety of processes—that's all. One should resist the temptation to imagine some other effect that needs to build up over time, because . . .

(5) The proposed consensual thesis is not that this global availability causes some further effect or a different sort altogether—igniting the glow of conscious qualia, gaining entrance to the Cartesian Theater, or something like that—but that it is, all by itself, a conscious state. This is the hardest part of the thesis to understand and embrace. In fact, some who favor the rest of the consensus balk at this point and want to suppose that global availability must somehow kindle some special effect over and above the merely computational or functional competences such global availability ensures. Those who harbor this hunch are surrendering just when victory is at hand, I will argue, for these "merely functional" competences are the very competences that consciousness was supposed to enable.

Here is where scientists have been tempted—or blackmailed—into defending unmistakably philosophical

theses about consciousness, on both sides of the issue. Some have taken up the philosophical issues with relish, and others with reluctance and foreboding, with uneven results for both types. In this paper I will highlight a few of the points made and attempted, supporting some and criticizing others, but mainly trying to show how relatively minor decisions about word choice and emphasis can conspire to mislead the theoretician's imagination. Is there a "Hard Problem" (Chalmers, 1995, 1996) and if so what is it, and what could possibly count as progress towards solving it? Although I have staunchly defended—and will defend here again—the verdict that Chalmers' "Hard Problem" is a theorist's illusion (Dennett, 1996b, 1998), something inviting therapy, not a real problem to be solved with revolutionary new science, I view my task here to be dispelling confusion first, and taking sides second. Let us see, as clearly as we can, what the question is, and is not, before we declare any allegiances.

Basically, I agree with everything Dennett writes above 100% if you want to know my views in some detail on what conscious states actually are and how they are instantiated in a human nervous system.

CHAPTER 2.478.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 7:41 PM

2.477. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

What Dennett and I are saying is that qualia are not real, and that qualia are a bad theoretical flourish that is unnecessary, not that there are mental states that don't exist. You can cheerfully say that people have conscious experiences, even that they have something we would allow were usefully called "raw feels," without all the theoretical baggage that philosophers of mind have saddled these concepts with.

One test I use is whether you accept the plausibility of a David Chalmers zombie. If you reject it, you can probably reject qualia, too. But to accept the plausibility of a Chalmers zombie means you accept qualia in some form or other.

The "raw feels" are the qualia. Quining qualia means eliminating the "raw feels" and ending up with p-zombies.

Now, if you want a solid answer on what Dennett (and I) think conscious experiences actually are, you can either read *Consciousness Explained*, or the very good paper "Are We Explaining Consciousness Yet?" published in a fantastic special edition of *COGNITION* along with several other papers.

It covers, from a philosophical angle, the growing consensus model of consciousness in cognitive neuroscience called the Global Neuronal Workspace. (This model, neurologically, is pretty much what *Consciousness Explained* spelled out philosophically ten years before this paper was published.)

The GNW can be summarized as follows, from a paper by Dehaene and Naccache in the same volume, with numbered footnotes Dennett addresses later:

At any given time, many modular (1) cerebral networks are active in parallel and process information in an unconscious manner. An information (2) becomes conscious, however, if the neural population that represents it is mobilized by top-down (3) attentional amplification into a brain-scale state of coherent activity that involves many neurons distributed throughout the brain. The long distance connectivity of these "workplace neurons" can, when they are active for a minimal duration (4), make the information available to a variety of processes including perceptual categorization, long-term memorization, evaluation, and intentional action. We postulate that this global availability of information through the workplace is (5) what we subjectively experience as a conscious state. Dennett's elaborations to the above go as follows:

(1) Modularity comes in degrees and kinds; what is being stressed here is only that these are specialist networks with limited powers of information processing.

(2) There is no standard term for an event in the brain that carries information or content on some topic (e.g., information about color at a retinal location, information about a phoneme heard, information about the familiarity or novelty of other information currently being carried, etc.). Whenever some specialist network or smaller structure makes a discrimination, fixes some element of content, "an information" in their sense comes into existence. "Signal," "content-fixation," (Dennett, 1991), "micro-taking," (Dennett and Kinsbourne, 1992) "wordless narrative" (Damasio 1999), and "representation" (Jack and Shallice) are among the near-synonyms in use.

(3) We should be careful not to take the term "top-down" too literally. Since there is no single organizational summit to the brain, it means only that such attentional amplification is not just modulated "bottom-up" by features internal to the processing stream in which it rides, but also by sideways influences, from competitive, cooperative, collateral activities whose emergent net result is what we may lump together and call top-down influence. In an arena of opponent processes (as in a democracy) the "top" is distributed, not localized. Nevertheless, among the various competitive processes, there are important bifurcations or thresholds that can lead to strikingly different sequels, and it is these differences that best account for our pretheoretical intuitions about the difference between conscious and unconscious events in the mind. If we are careful, we can use "top-down" as an innocent allusion, exploiting a vivid fossil trace of a discarded Cartesian theory to mark the real differences that that theory misdescribed. (This will be elaborated in my discussion of Jack and Shallice below.)

(4) How long must this minimal duration be? Long enough to make the information available to a variety of processes—that's all. One should resist the temptation to imagine some other effect that needs to build up over time, because . . .

(5) The proposed consensual thesis is not that this global availability causes some further effect or a different sort altogether—igniting the glow of conscious qualia, gaining entrance to the Cartesian Theater, or something like that—but that it is, all by itself, a conscious state. This is the hardest part of the thesis to understand and embrace. In fact, some who favor the rest of the consensus balk at this point and want to suppose that global availability must somehow kindle some special effect over and

above the merely computational or functional competences such global availability ensures. Those who harbor this hunch are surrendering just when victory is at hand, I will argue, for these "merely functional" competences are the very competences that consciousness was supposed to enable.

Here is where scientists have been tempted—or blackmailed—into defending unmistakably philosophical theses about consciousness, on both sides of the issue. Some have taken up the philosophical issues with relish, and others with reluctance and foreboding, with uneven results for both types. In this paper I will highlight a few of the points made and attempted, supporting some and criticizing others, but mainly trying to show how relatively minor decisions about word choice and emphasis can conspire to mislead the theoretician's imagination. Is there a "Hard Problem" (Chalmers, 1995, 1996) and if so what is it, and what could possibly count as progress towards solving it? Although I have staunchly defended—and will defend here again—the verdict that Chalmers' "Hard Problem" is a theorist's illusion (Dennett, 1996b, 1998), something inviting therapy, not a real problem to be solved with revolutionary new science, I view my task here to be dispelling confusion first, and taking sides second. Let us see, as clearly as we can, what the question is, and is not, before we declare any allegiances.

A functionalist explanation of GNW information processing in no way addresses the Hard problem. The issue of 'conscious vs unconscious events in the mind' also in no way addresses the Hard problem.

Fallacies are fallacies, even if they are buried under hundreds of pages of functionalist talk. The GNW is a good attempt, but I think Dennett and his followers should just steer clear of philosophy altogether. They just don't know what they are talking about, and end up denying the existence of consciousness.

CHAPTER 2.479.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 8:18 PM

Faustus

"What mental states are real?" Um. . .all of them? (You can't literally be asking that question, so maybe I'm just being an idiot.)

I mean, unless you're dealing with a crazy person, any mental state they say they have is going to be real. I'll even grant that some mental states can be both unconscious and real if they have measurable impacts on behaviors. And some can be implicit.

What Dennett and I are saying is that qualia are not real, and that qualia are a bad theoretical flourish that is unnecessary, not that there are mental states that don't exist. You can cheerfully say that people have conscious experiences, even that they have something we would allow were usefully called "raw feels," without all the theoretical baggage that philosophers of mind have saddled these concepts with.

Alright, great. Lets not worry about different definitions of "qualia" and "consciousness" and "mental" and home in on phenomenological 'what it is like' experience then. We agree that exists.

Now, if you want a solid answer on what Dennett (and I) think conscious experiences actually are, you can either read *Consciousness Explained*, or the very good paper "Are We Explaining Consciousness Yet?" published in a fantastic special edition of *COGNITION* along with several other papers. It covers...

OK, but that's basically talking about how brains function. And we are confident that at least some specific brain activity correlates with specific experience, neuroscience can fill in those details.

Philosophy of mind rather tries to explain that correlation, in terms of *understanding how and why experience exists*. (We can understand the function of experience in terms of utility). That's the philosophical issue. Because if we look to our physicalist scientific model of the world - reducible material stuff and forces which act on it - there is no apparent explanation for how certain physical brain activities correlate to experience. It wouldn't be predicted by our physicalist understanding of how the world works. It can't apparently explain it. In fact there is no place for experience in the Standard Model. There is an Explanatory Gap.

That's what I'd like to know your thoughts on. How do we explain experience, not in terms of its function/behavioural effects, but how it fits into our monist material substance model of what the world is made of, and how that substance acts in terms of physical forces/fields/properties/processes?

CHAPTER 2.480.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 1:04 AM

2.460. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.452. by GE Morton

Well, that is question-begging. Yes, mental events are caused by brain events. But that doesn't entail that they are brain events. You are assuming that brain events can only cause other brain events (or perhaps other "physical" events).

That is not an assumption, it is me paying strict attention to the evidence that actually exists without unjustified spin.

Well, I think most people --- virtually everyone --- would disagree, would affirm that the evidence shows, conclusively, that brain events do indeed cause mental events. Everyone, that is, who experiences mental events and who knows anything about brain functions. But if you dogmatically insist that physical events can *only* cause other "physical" events, (with "physical" understood in the colloquial sense), then you'll be forced to an easily refuted claim the mental event and correlated, causative brain event are identical.

There is no evidence whatsoever that brain events cause further physical events that are mental events but not brain events. If I am wrong, please cite an example from the peer reviewed scientific literature.

Oh, there are thousands of those. Anyone who undertakes to locate the neural underpinnings of color discrimination, olfactory or tactile or auditory discriminations, depression or elation, etc. -- -- all mental events --- will acknowledge that difference. Some of them, like you, may believe a

subjective color sensation is "identical" to the causative brain process, but their very analysis, and their terminology, belies that belief. After all, if mental events were clearly identical to brain events *there would be nothing to explain* --- there is no problem to solve.

But clearly there is some problem to solve, as everyone working on it (including Dennett) admits by that very fact.

2.452. by GE Morton

If we can distinguish between a mental phenomenon (such as the sensation I experience when beholding a red square) and the activities of a group of neurons observable as EKG traces or under a microscope, then they are obviously not identical.

It is not obvious at all that they are not identical, otherwise there would not be an abundance of scientists and philosophers who do think they are, in fact, identical. Talk about ACTUAL question begging, here.

"An abundance of scientists who believe . . ." Are you now resorting to appeals to authority? It is obvious that they are not identical if one uses the term "identical" with its common definitions. I gave those earlier: There is Leibniz's definition ("two things are identical if they cannot be distinguished from one another") and the compositional sense (one thing can be reduced to the other, e.g., "lightning is a stream of electrons," or, "Table salt is sodium chloride"). Mental events and brain events are not identical per either of those criteria. Perhaps you can set forth the criteria for "identity" you have in mind.

2.452. by GE Morton

All I can conclude is that there is a causal relation between them.

Then you should embrace the dualism that is fundamentally at the heart of the way you see consciousness, and stop trying to deny it. There is no documented case anywhere of brain events causing anything other than other brain or nervous system events.

Of course there is. There are millions of them. If you experience distinctive sensations which allow you to distinguish between the color of a rose blossom and the color of the nearby leaves, then you know about mental events, and what "qualia" are. Are you suggesting those sensations are not caused by brain processes? If they are, then we clearly have evidence that physical events can cause some non-physical (in the colloquial sense) events.

You need to abandon that monism/dualism bugaboo. It is a relic of a wrong-headed ontology.

You can't call mental events physical events (but not brain events) unless you can point to exactly what measurable particles carry them that aren't part of the brain. They can't be physical if they are not addressed or addressable by physics.

Yes, you can. You may call an event or effect "physical" if it is produced by a physical system. What you're claiming there is that an effect can't be "physical" unless it is *reducible* to accepted laws of physics, and derivable from accepted physical models. But for well-understood reasons mental phenomena cannot be so reduced or derived. That is just a "brute fact" we have to live with.

You're doing exactly what all dishonest scholars of his work do--cherry picking what looks convenient and ignoring what goes directly against the misrepresentation you are trying to push. Very early on in one of the papers you cite ("Quining Qualia"), he says, in plain English:

"Everything real has properties, and since I don't deny the reality of conscious experience, I grant that conscious experience has properties. "

So there you go. He believes in the reality of conscious experiences, he just thinks the way folks like you theorize about them is misguided.

Yes, Dennett does not deny conscious experience. He denies qualia because he construes that term as implying some "non-physical substance." But it doesn't. In the paper you cite ("Are we explaining consciousness yet?") he says:

"(2) There is no standard term for an event in the brain that carries information or content on some topic (e.g. information about color at a retinal location, information about a phoneme heard, information about the familiarity or novelty of other information currently being carried, etc.). Whenever some specialist network or smaller structure makes a discrimination, fixes some element of content, 'an information' in their sense comes into existence. 'Signal', 'content-fixation' (Dennett, 1991), 'micro-taking' (Dennett & Kinsbourne, 1992), 'wordless narrative' (Damasio, 1999), and 'representation' (see Jack and Shallice in this volume) are among the near-synonyms in use."

<https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/Den...ss2000.pdf>

Well, yes there is such a "standard term." It is, "qualia." My own definition, given earlier, was, "the distinctive quality of a sensory impression which allows us to distinguish it from other impressions delivered over the same or other sensory channels."

Dennett is warring against a mere term, because he takes it to carry vacuous archaic implications. His own definitions above, and mine, carry no "dualistic" implications whatsoever.

2.452. by GE Morton

But the existence of qualia (and other mental phenomena) are not products or consequences of any theoretical or ideological commitments.

That is exactly what qualia are. Otherwise, there would not be philosophers and scientists who deny that they exist while being perfectly happy to acknowledge that mental states are real.

You can only admit mental states and deny qualia if you are imbuing the latter term with spurious implications or connotations.

Feel free be the revolutionary pioneer who transforms what cognitive science is. Step one: find out a way to articulate how mental event can be a physical state that is not also a brain state and then verify it experimentally. Good luck with that!

I would not be a pioneer. Many other cognitive scientists are perfectly willing to acknowledge qualia.



GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 1:31 AM

2.477. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

What Dennett and I are saying is that qualia are not real, and that qualia are a bad theoretical flourish that is unnecessary, not that there are mental states that don't exist. You can cheerfully say that people have conscious experiences, even that they have something we would allow were usefully called "raw feels," without all the theoretical baggage that philosophers of mind have saddled these concepts with.

One test I use is whether you accept the plausibility of a David Chalmers zombie. If you reject it, you can probably reject qualia, too. But to accept the plausibility of a Chalmers zombie means you accept qualia in some form or other.

Just a couple of points. "You can cheerfully say that people have conscious experiences, even that they have something we would allow were usefully called "raw feels," without all the theoretical baggage that philosophers of mind have saddled these concepts with."

Well, then you have the problem of explaining "raw feels," which, like qualia, are not reducible to the laws of physics, or "identical" to brain states. No knowledge of physics will allow me to know in advance what an electric shock will feel like before I grab the hot wire. That's just a fact; there is no philosophical baggage involved.

Chalmers' zombies are plausible, in the sense of being logically conceivable. But it is theoretically inelegant, because it would require us to assume that we, who unquestionable do have conscious experience, differ in a fundamental way from all those others who resemble us in numerous other respects. We would become singularities --- thus handing us a problem even more difficult to explain.



Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 3:28 AM

2.480. by *GE Morton*

Well, I think most people --- virtually everyone --- would disagree, would affirm that the evidence shows, conclusively, that brain events do indeed cause mental events. Everyone, that is, who experiences mental events and who knows anything about brain functions.

There is zero evidence in all of science that would show that brain events *cause* mental events.

Wonder what you are doing on a philosophy forum?

CHAPTER 2.483.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4:35 AM

2.482. by Atla


There is zero evidence in all of science that would show that brain events cause mental events.

Really? A bee stings you. Nerve fibers carry information from the site of the sting to your brain, provoking a number of neural events. An instant later you feel pain, a mental event. No causal relation there?

Perhaps you've adopted some eclectic definition of "evidence"?

CHAPTER 2.484.

~

Faustus5 on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 2:47 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.478. by Atla

The "raw feels" are the qualia. Quining qualia means eliminating the "raw feels" and ending up with p-zombies.

I don't know what you think good philosophy amounts to, but surely making up crap, as you have done in this quote, doesn't count.

Quining qualia just means re-imagining what they are in a theoretical framework that differs from yours. If it meant ending up with P-zombies, Dennett would not be the vociferous denier of P-zombies that he is.

Being honest about what the folks you disagree with actually believe is a pretty important virtue if good scholarship is something you value.

2.478. by Atla

A functionalist explanation of GNW information processing in no way addresses the Hard problem. The issue of 'conscious vs unconscious events in the mind' also in no way addresses the Hard problem.

Except that we think the hard problem is a completely bogus invention of bad philosophy, a problem that is specifically designed to be impossible to solve. So we just laugh at it and move on.


2.478. by Atla

The GNW is a good attempt, but I think Dennett and his followers should just steer clear of philosophy altogether. They just don't know what they are talking about, and end up denying the existence of consciousness.

Let me repeat: Being honest about what the folks you disagree with actually believe is a pretty important virtue if good scholarship is something you value.

C H A P T E R 2 . 4 8 5 .

~

Faustus5 on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 2:58 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.479. by Gertie

Philosophy of mind rather tries to explain that correlation, in terms of understanding how and why experience exists. (We can understand the function of experience in terms of utility). That's the philosophical issue. Because if we look to our physicalist scientific model of the world - reducible material stuff and forces which act on it - there is no apparent explanation for how certain physical brain activities correlate to experience.

In my opinion, literally the only way you can get that explanation is by mapping all the events that happen in people's bodies going from stimulus to motor response and memory formation, in increasing levels of detail. If they tell me one type of pain is sharp and another is dull, for instance, I want to see what happens inside them that is different and leads to different descriptions of their feelings.

If a philosophical ideology tells me that there is something missing from this picture that is still being left out and not being explained, I'm just going to ignore it. I honestly think scientists can and should ignore this sort of thing, because it just isn't a serious way of understanding reality.

2.479. by Gertie

It wouldn't be predicted by our physicalist understanding of how the world works. It can't apparently explain it.

Well, we've already had cases where scientists who know a lot about how the brain works have predicted specific kinds of hallucinations that had never been observed up to that point. A hallucination counts as an experience, doesn't it? And right now, we can look at a brain scan and tell whether someone is observing or thinking about an object versus a face. So there's that, too.

As technology and cognitive neuroscience improves, we'll be able to add more and more to what we can predict in advance, from a third person perspective.

This may not satisfy some philosophers, and I get that. I just don't think those philosophers are doing useful work.

CHAPTER 2.486.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 3:01 PM



2.483. by GE Morton

*A bee stings you. Nerve fibers carry information from the site of the sting to your brain, provoking a number of neural events. An instant later you feel pain, a mental event. **No causal relation there?***

No, I think that's a correlation. And **correlation is not causation**, as we have all heard a thousand times from our statistics lecturers, yes?

CHAPTER 2.487.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 3:36 PM

2.486. by Pattern-chaser

2.483. by GE Morton


*A bee stings you. Nerve fibers carry information from the site of the sting to your brain, provoking a number of neural events. An instant later you feel pain, a mental event. **No causal relation there?***

*No, I think that's a correlation. And **correlation is not causation**, as we have all heard a thousand times from our statistics lecturers, yes?*

Yes, and it's an important point. However, some correlations are causation. Keep in mind that events in every causal sequence are also correlated. We can consider A to be the cause of B if B always follows A (*ceteris paribus*). But if B only correlates with A 70% of the time, we can't draw that conclusion.

CHAPTER 2.488.

~

Faustus5 on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 3:37 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.480. by GE Morton

Well, I think most people --- virtually everyone --- would disagree, would affirm that the evidence shows, conclusively, that brain events do indeed cause mental events.

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever which supports the bizarre position you have adopted. None. Zip. Zero. And incidentally, you are literally the only person I've ever encountered who holds this "I'm really a dualist but I'm going to pretend otherwise" view.

2.480. by GE Morton

But if you dogmatically insist that physical events can only cause other "physical" events, (with "physical" understood in the colloquial sense), then you'll be forced to an easily refuted claim the mental event and correlated, causative brain event are identical.

In the real world, positions that are enthusiastically endorsed by a large number of smart people are rarely ever "easily refuted", even when those people turn out to be just flat out wrong decades later. Food for thought.

2.480. by GE Morton

Oh, there are thousands of those. Anyone who undertakes to locate the neural underpinnings of color discrimination, olfactory or tactile or auditory discriminations, depression or elation, etc. --- all mental events --- will acknowledge that difference.

Note that I asked for a citation from the scientific literature which endorses the very specific idea you have been promoting, and you couldn't do it. To wit, the idea that brain events cause mental events that are physical yet still not themselves brain events. No one but you thinks this way, at least that I'm aware of.

2.480. by GE Morton

"An abundance of scientists who believe . . ." Are you now resorting to appeals to authority?

What I'm appealing to is sanity and serious scholarship. When you say that something is "obviously" false when it is a mainstream belief, you're playing games and not engaging seriously with the many scientists and philosophers who do not see things the way you do. Go ahead and insist they are wrong--they might very well be wrong!--but don't be glib and arrogantly assume you have all the answers that have evaded thousands of smart people who have been thinking just as hard about these issues as you have.

2.480. by GE Morton

It is obvious that they are not identical if one uses the term "identical" with its common definitions.

Golly gee wilikers, maybe this is a clue that when it comes to mind/brain identity, the difficulty of the issue comes from **mistakenly thinking we should be using common definitions of identity**. Did this thought ever occur to you? Perhaps consciousness is the one area where thinking "normally" about identity is the very thing that trips people up.

As Terrapin has been trying to calmly explain, and what nobody but me seems to grasp, when a

physical system is representing a state of affairs to a bunch of other networked systems it is connected to, the network gets an experience of what is being represented (a pain, an after image, a beautiful sunset). When a different, unconnected network is, say, watching a brain scan of the first system, it's experience is of watching a brain doing stuff. All that makes a brain event your own mental event is the way you as a network are wired to the event.

2.480. by GE Morton

What you're claiming there is that an effect can't be "physical" unless it is reducible to accepted laws of physics, and derivable from accepted physical models.

I am making no such claim. Very little in science can be reduced, because the requirements for successful reduction are very difficult to achieve. So the mind/brain identity I endorse is explicitly non-reductive.

2.480. by GE Morton

Yes, Dennett does not deny conscious experience. He denies qualia because he construes that term as implying some "non-physical substance." But it doesn't.

Actually, it does.

2.480. by GE Morton

Well, yes there is such a "standard term." It is, "qualia." My own definition, given earlier, was, "the distinctive quality of a sensory impression which allows us to distinguish it from other impressions delivered over the same or other sensory channels."

If all that people like you meant by "qualia" was this, no one would have a problem with it. But you go beyond this to views that are utterly un-scientific.

CHAPTER 2.489.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4:39 PM

2.483. by GE Morton

2.482. by Atla

There is zero evidence in all of science that would show that brain events cause mental events.

Really? A bee stings you. Nerve fibers carry information from the site of the sting to your brain, provoking a number of neural events. An instant later you feel pain, a mental event. No causal relation there?

Perhaps you've adopted some eclectic definition of "evidence"?

You don't seem to have any grasp what "scientific evidence" means. Science can't detect pain and mental events.

CHAPTER 2.490.

~

Atla on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 4:48 PM

2.484. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.478. by Atla

The "raw feels" are the qualia. Quining qualia means eliminating the "raw feels" and ending up with p-zombies.

I don't know what you think good philosophy amounts to, but surely making up crap, as you have done in this quote, doesn't count.

Quining qualia just means re-imagining what they are in a theoretical framework that differs from yours. If it meant ending up with P-zombies, Dennett would not be the vociferous denier of P-zombies that he is.

Being honest about what the folks you disagree with actually believe is a pretty important virtue if good scholarship is something you value.

2.478. by Atla

A functionalist explanation of GNW information processing in no way addresses the Hard problem. The issue of 'conscious vs unconscious events in the mind' also in no way addresses the Hard problem.

Except that we think the hard problem is a completely bogus invention of bad philosophy, a problem that is specifically designed to be impossible to solve. So we just laugh at it and move on.

2.478. by Atla

The GNW is a good attempt, but I think Dennett and his followers should just steer clear of philosophy altogether. They just don't know what they are talking about, and end up denying the existence of consciousness.

Let me repeat: Being honest about what the folks you disagree with actually believe is a pretty important virtue if good scholarship is something you value.

I'm not the one making up crap. 'By qualia I don't mean qualia, but when it comes to the Hard problem, I did mean qualia by it' is anything but consistency and intellectual honesty.

CHAPTER 2.491.

~

GE Morton on  Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 5:01 PM

2.489. by Atla

You don't seem to have any grasp what "scientific evidence" means. Science can't detect pain and mental events.

LOL. Really? Scientists don't detect pain when they're stung by bees? Or do you just mean that scientists can't detect --- which means feel --- others' pain via scientific methods? The latter is true enough. Does that mean pain doesn't exist?

Methinks you need a broader understanding of what constitutes "science."

CHAPTER 2.492.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 5:05 PM

Faustus

Gertie wrote: ↑ Yesterday, 4:18 pm Philosophy of mind rather tries to explain that correlation, in terms of understanding how and why experience exists . (We can understand the function of experience in terms of utility). That's the philosophical issue. Because if we look to our physicalist scientif...

In my opinion, literally the only way you can get that explanation is by mapping all the events that happen in people's bodies going from stimulus to motor response and memory formation, in increasing levels of detail. If they tell me one type of pain is sharp and another is dull, for instance, I want to see what happens inside them that is different and leads to different descriptions of their feelings.

That's simply noting correlations.

If a philosophical ideology tells me that there is something missing from this picture that is still being left out and not being explained, I'm just going to ignore it. I honestly think scientists can and should ignore this sort of thing, because it just isn't a serious way of understanding reality.

It's not an ideology to ask for an explanation. You of course can choose to ignore anything not obviously explicable by science, but there's no reason philosophy should.

Gertie wrote: ↑

Yesterday, 4:18 pm

It wouldn't be predicted by our physicalist understanding of how the world works. It can't apparently explain it.

Well, we've already had cases where scientists who know a lot about how the brain works have predicted specific kinds of hallucinations that had never been observed up to that point. A hallucination counts as an experience, doesn't it? And right now, we can look at a brain scan and tell whether someone is observing or thinking about an object versus a face. So there's that, too.

As technology and cognitive neuroscience improves, we'll be able to add more and more to what we can predict in advance, from a third person perspective.

This may not satisfy some philosophers, and I get that. I just don't think those philosophers are doing useful work.

What our current scientific understanding wouldn't predict is how and why experience correlates with certain physical processes at all. That's the Hard Problem Dennet refuses to acknowledge. If your position is it simply doesn't interest you and you prefer to ignore it that's fine, but it doesn't mean the problem doesn't exist. And if you're going to endorse a particular position like Identity Theory I'd have thought you'd have considered how such an idea might explain the mind body relationship, why it's a better explanation to you, the pros and cons.

CHAPTER 2.493.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 5:08 PM

2.491. by GE Morton

2.489. by Atla

You don't seem to have any grasp what "scientific evidence" means. Science can't detect pain and mental events.

LOL. Really? Scientists don't detect pain when they're stung by bees? Or do you just mean that scientists can't detect --- which means feel --- others' pain via scientific methods? The latter is true enough. Does that mean pain doesn't exist?

Methinks you need a broader understanding of what constitutes "science."

You don't seem to have a good grasp that "science" deals with the objective. Weird.

Broader understandings, such as self-reported subjective stuff, are typically no longer considered "science".

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 5:33 PM



2.486. by Pattern-chaser

No, I think that's a correlation. And *correlation is not causation*, as we have all heard a thousand times from our statistics lecturers, yes?

2.487. by GE Morton

Yes, and it's an important point. However, some correlations are causation. Keep in mind that events in every causal sequence are also correlated.

No, some correlations *turn out to be* causal, but we don't assert as much until we've demonstrated that they are actually causal, yes?

2.487. by GE Morton

We can consider A to be the cause of B if B always follows A (*ceteris paribus*). But if B only correlates with A 70% of the time, we can't draw that conclusion.

I don't think we can, but maybe I just don't understand the details of the statistics that describe such things. Perhaps A always follows B because C, the actual cause, causes B to happen first, followed by A?

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 6:21 PM

2.494. by Pattern-chaser

2.487. by GE Morton

Yes, and it's an important point. However, some correlations are causation. Keep in mind that events in every causal sequence are also correlated.

No, some correlations turn out to be causal . . .

You appear to be denying what I said, but you're not. Some correlations are also cause/effect relations. They don't "turn out" to be those; they are those all along. What turns out is our discovery of that relationship.

. . . but we don't assert as much until we've demonstrated that they are actually causal, yes?

Yes. They are "actually causal" when B follows A predictably, every time.

I don't think we can, but maybe I just don't understand the details of the statistics that describe such things. Perhaps A always follows B because C, the actual cause, causes B to happen first, followed by A?

In that case the "actual cause" --- Aristotle's "efficient cause" --- of B is A. The "actual cause" of A is C. Most effects are products of fairly long causal chains.

CHAPTER 2.496.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 8:51 PM



2.475. by GE Morton

No. It is a transformation of a reference frame, or of some 3D object within that frame (which operations are equivalent). The apparent properties of the thing --- what is visible from a given viewpoint --- will change accordingly. But the properties of the thing(s) viewed don't change.

This is something else we need to clear up that you keep repeating. Apparent properties *are* properties, aren't they? You could argue that they're not properties of a particular thing, but regardless of that, they *are* properties, no?

CHAPTER 2.497.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 12:28 AM

2.488. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.480. by GE Morton

Well, I think most people --- virtually everyone --- would disagree, would affirm that the evidence shows, conclusively, that brain events do indeed cause mental events.

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever which supports the bizarre position you have adopted. None. Zip. Zero.

What? Are you agreeing with Atla, that brain events don't cause mental events? (Remember that you've already admitted that mental events exist).

And incidentally, you are literally the only person I've ever encountered who holds this "I'm really a dualist but I'm going to pretend otherwise" view.

Nope. I'm a pluralist who rejects the monism/dualism dichotomy --- a "pluralist" who holds that there are as many existents, and categories of existence, that we find it useful to postulate. None of them need be considered "basic," foundational, or primal, but all of them should be related in some coherent way. Monism/dualism is an archaic ontological dead-end. (The only thing we might

fairly deem ontologically primal are those very subjective experiences we're trying to account for, the phenomena from which all scientific/conceptual analysis begins).

Note that I asked for a citation from the scientific literature which endorses the very specific idea you have been promoting, and you couldn't do it. To wit, the idea that brain events cause mental events that are physical yet still not themselves brain events. No one but you thinks this way, at least that I'm aware of.

Are you offering that *ad populum* argument as a refutation? And of course, I'm not going to embark on a search of that immense haystack for that particular needle. It doesn't matter whether anyone else "thinks this way" or not. Those who might disagree need to broaden their conception of what counts as a "physical effect" (and not by very much).

What I'm appealing to is sanity and serious scholarship. When you say that something is "obviously" false when it is a mainstream belief, you're playing games and not engaging seriously with the many scientists and philosophers who do not see things the way you do. Go ahead and insist they are wrong--they might very well be wrong!--but don't be glib and arrogantly assume you have all the answers that have evaded thousands of smart people who have been thinking just as hard about these issues as you have.

Yes, the mind/brain identity thesis is obviously false. But see next comment.

Golly gee wilikers, maybe this is a clue that when it comes to mind/brain identity, the difficulty of the issue comes from mistakenly thinking we should be using common definitions of identity. Did this thought ever occur to you? Perhaps consciousness is the one area where thinking "normally" about identity is the very thing that trips people up.

Well, Faustus, if the common definitions of "identity" are inadequate, and you have some other criteria in mind for declaring two distinguishable things to be identical, then you need to set forth that criterion. Neither a correlation between A and B, nor a causal relation between them, constitutes an *identity* between them. As far as I can see those latter relationships are all you have. So please explain how you get from them to "identity."

As Terrapin has been trying to calmly explain, and what nobody but me seems to grasp, when a physical system is representing a state of affairs to a bunch of other networked systems it is connected to, the network gets an experience of what is being represented (a pain, an after image, a beautiful sunset). When a different, unconnected network is, say, watching a brain scan of the first system, it's experience is of watching a brain doing stuff. All that makes a brain event your own mental event is the way you as a network are wired to the event.

Well, I agree with all that! But you seem to be oblivious to the key issue: those experiences are *not* identical (per the common definitions), and are not transformable into one another via some simple algorithm, as are perspectival differences. Only when they are, are you entitled to claim the two things perceived ("experienced") are the same thing. The first-person experience is quite distinct from, not predictable from, and not transformable into, the third-party experience. Indeed, they are apprehended, neurologically speaking, via entirely different mechanisms. You just have to accept that the first-party experience is an empirically distinct effect of certain physical processes, but is inexplicable via scientific methods because it is private, inaccessible to third-party analysis and observation. Declaring them to be identical with their physical correlates is just a lazy way to dismiss the problem.

The real objection to this view will be that an ubiquitous empirical phenomenon is thus left inexplicable scientifically. Yes, it will be. But it is far from the only thing scientifically inexplicable. At least in this case we know why it is inexplicable.

2.480. by GE Morton

Well, yes there is such a "standard term." It is, "qualia." My own definition, given earlier, was, "the distinctive quality of a sensory impression which allows us to distinguish it from other impressions delivered over the same or other sensory channels."

If all that people like you meant by "qualia" was this, no one would have a problem with it. But you go beyond this to views that are utterly un-scientific.

That is the same definition I gave earlier, and have assumed all along. Where do you think I "go beyond" that view?

CHAPTER 2.498.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 2:45 AM

2.496. by Terrapin Station

2.475. by GE Morton

No. It is a transformation of a reference frame, or of some 3D object within that frame (which operations are equivalent). The apparent properties of the thing --- what is visible from a given viewpoint --- will change accordingly. But the properties of the thing(s) viewed don't change.

This is something else we need to clear up that you keep repeating. Apparent properties are properties, aren't they?

Yes, they are properties of our percept. But not of the thing perceived. A photograph of a tiger has its own properties --- 8x10 inches, 1/64 in thick, black and white, slightly out-of-focus, etc. --- but those are not properties of the tiger.

CHAPTER 2.499.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 9:49 AM

2.494. by Pattern-chaser

No, some correlations turn out to be causal...



2.495. by GE Morton

You appear to be denying what I said, but you're not. Some correlations are also cause/effect relations. They don't "turn out" to be those; they are those all along. What turns out is our discovery of that relationship.

Hindsight works in a very specific way. First you prove something. Then you can proceed on the basis that it's proven. There's a strict chronological sequence here.

CHAPTER 2.500.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 1:38 PM

GE Morton wrote: Yes, and it's an important point. However, some correlations are causation. Keep in mind that events in every causal sequence are also correlated. We can consider A to be the cause of B if B always follows A (ceteris paribus). But if B only correlates with A 70% of the time, we can't draw that conclusion.

Pattern-chaser wrote: I don't think we can, but maybe I just don't understand the details of the statistics that describe such things. Perhaps A always follows B because C, the actual cause, causes B to happen first, followed by A?

I think when we talk about inferring cause from observed instances of correlation we have to be clearer than this about exactly what we mean by statements made as a result of empirical observations such as "B always follows A" or "B follows A X% of the time".

1st point: B following A can only be observed to happen a finite number of times. So "B always follows A" is an inductive generalisation. i.e. we go from an observation of the finite to a statement about the infinite (or arbitrarily large). As such, it's not a proposition that can ever be directly observed to be true.

2nd point: B following A leads us to infer a causal relationship between A and B but that doesn't necessarily mean that A causes B. They could both be caused by C.

3rd point: It isn't the case that "B always follows A" implies cause and "B follows A X% of the time (X<100)" doesn't. It's not all-or-nothing like that. If it were, then point 1 would mean that we never infer cause. In reality we say that the higher the value of that X% the more likely we think there is to be a causal connection. If we see an instance of A without a following B, we don't necessarily break the causal connection, unless we're specifically talking about an idealised (non-real) observational situation in which we're 100% certain that A happened, that B didn't happen, that A and B are precisely the same events as they were for the previous observations and that there are no other events in the system that are not visible to us. Being ideal, that situation never happens in reality. Possibly the "ceteris paribus" was intended to cover that.

CHAPTER 2.501.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 1:53 PM

Ignore point 2. Already covered. My bad.

CHAPTER 2.502.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 4:52 PM



2.498. by GE Morton

2.496. by Terrapin Station

This is something else we need to clear up that you keep repeating. Apparent properties are properties, aren't they?

Yes, they are properties of our percept. But not of the thing perceived. A photograph of a tiger has its own properties --- 8x10 inches, 1/64 in thick, black and white, slightly out-of-focus, etc. --- but those are not properties of the tiger.

Sure. And you're claiming that algorithms can provide a "transformation" of these properties, right?

Are you claiming that the algorithm does this without having any correlation to the properties in question?

CHAPTER 2.503.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 5:43 PM

2.502. by Terrapin Station

Are you claiming that the algorithm does this without having any correlation to the properties in question?

Yes. The algorithm is indifferent to the properties transformed. It will transform whatever apparent properties are within the frame.

CHAPTER 2.504.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 6:04 PM



2.503. by GE Morton

2.502. by Terrapin Station

Are you claiming that the algorithm does this without having any correlation to the properties in question?

Yes. The algorithm is indifferent to the properties transformed. It will transform whatever apparent properties are within the frame.

What frame are we talking about exactly?

CHAPTER 2.505.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 10:17 PM

2.504. by Terrapin Station

What frame are we talking about exactly?

This sidetrack, and your tedious off-the-wall questions, are tiresome and pointless. I explained the difference between an apparent difference due to perspective and a real difference, quite clearly, I think. I'm done with it.

CHAPTER 2.506.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Friday, October 9, 2020 at 1:38 AM

GE Morton wrote: Yes, and it's an important point. However, some correlations are causation. Keep in mind that events in every causal sequence are also correlated. We can consider A to be the cause of B if B always follows A (ceteris paribus). But if B only correlates with A 70% of the time, we can't draw that conclusion.

Pattern-chaser wrote: I don't think we can, but maybe I just don't understand the details of the statistics that describe such things. Perhaps A always follows B because C, the actual cause, causes B to happen first, followed by A?

I think when we talk about inferring cause from observed instances of correlation we have to be clearer than this about exactly what we mean by statements made as a result of empirical observations such as "B always follows A" or "B follows A X% of the time".

1st point: B following A can only be observed to happen a finite number of times. So "B always follows A" is an inductive generalisation. i.e. we go from an observation of the finite to a statement about the infinite (or arbitrarily large). As such, it's not a proposition that can ever be directly observed to be true.

I agree. "B always follows A" needs to be understood with the qualifier, "Within our experience." We then make a prediction that B will follow A in the future, and as long as that prediction is confirmed we stick with our causal analysis. Propositions asserting causal relations are always inductive, though there is a way to render them "sort of" deductive, to supply Hume's "necessary connexion."

3rd point: It isn't the case that "B always follows A" implies cause and "B follows A X% of the time ($X < 100$)" doesn't. It's not all-or-nothing like that. If it were, then point 1 would mean that we never infer cause. In reality we say that the higher the value of that X% the more likely we think there is to be a causal connection. If we see an instance of A without a following B, we don't necessarily break the causal connection, unless we're specifically talking about an idealised (non-real) observational situation in which we're 100% certain that A happened, that B didn't happen, that A and B are precisely the same events as they were for the previous observations and that there are no other events in the system that are not visible to us. Being ideal, that situation never happens in reality. Possibly the "ceteris paribus" was intended to cover that.

Yes, it was.

CHAPTER 2.507.

~

Terrapin Station on  Friday, October 9, 2020 at 7:29 AM



2.505. by GE Morton

2.504. by Terrapin Station

What frame are we talking about exactly?

This sidetrack, and your tedious off-the-wall questions, are tiresome and pointless. I explained the difference between an apparent difference due to perspective and a real difference, quite clearly, I think. I'm done with it.

Quelle surprise. Your view(s) doesn't at all stand up to scrutiny once we get down to brass tacks and examine what you're claiming in its details. But you're not about to participate very far into that.

CHAPTER 2.508.

~

Faustus5 on  Friday, October 9, 2020 at 12:58 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.492. by Gertie

It's not an ideology to ask for an explanation.

But it is an ideology to ignore an explanation when it is given.

2.492. by Gertie

You of course can choose to ignore anything not obviously explicable by science, but there's no reason philosophy should.

What I will ignore is bad philosophy which decides to re-invent the rules for what counts as a scientific explanation without giving good reasons for doing so.

A scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is one that describes what physically happens and why, tracing casual connections in a system from beginning to end. Then it is done. So a scientific explanation of a mental state will be one which traces all the causal pathways from brain events to the motor events subjects use to describe what their experiences are like. That's it.

If this sort of thing does not satisfy some philosophers, they are free to holler that science can't explain consciousness, and scientists are best advised to just ignore them and keep doing their jobs following the norms and practices they are accustomed to.

I'm aware that you believe this would just be turning our backs on a very real and difficult problem. I don't see it that way, obviously. I see it as us turning our backs on a community of very smart people who have deluded themselves about the nature of consciousness and who are not producing works or ideas I find even remotely compelling or interesting. If you find value in this sort of thing, good for you. I'm on a different path.

2.492. by Gertie

What our current scientific understanding wouldn't predict is how and why experience correlates with certain physical processes at all.

That explanation has already been achieved. For purely ideological reasons, it is not acceptable to some philosophers.

I am satisfied that the Global Neuronal Workspace model (or an evolved version of it as time goes on) is the only explanation one could ever have or expect to explain how brain states are mental states. If this model doesn't scratch an itch that some philosophers have, this is their problem, not my problem, and certainly not a problem for the science of consciousness.

CHAPTER 2.509.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, October 9, 2020 at 4:46 PM

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.
And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

So some of us have been trying to answer the question, how it is possible that so many people could be so dense for so long? Seems like quite a mystery. Though it seems to me that an absurd hegemony of dualistic thinking in Western philosophy, an ancient tradition, is more to blame, than an absurd hegemony of science.

CHAPTER 2.510.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Saturday, October 10, 2020 at 12:15 PM



2.509. by Atla

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

"Refuted"? Really? Where, when, how and by whom?

...and is this mind-body dualism, or some other similar perspective?

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, October 10, 2020 at 10:36 PM

A scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is one that describes what physically happens and why, tracing casual connections in a system from beginning to end. Then it is done. So a scientific explanation of a mental state will be one which traces all the causal pathways from brain events to the motor events subjects use to describe what their experiences are like. That's it.

Yes we see it differently. As I said, the current physicalist scientific model of what the world is made of and how it works has no place for experience. So if we agree experience exists, that means the model is incomplete. I think most would agree we don't know everything, but there is a particular problem re experience, in that it's not third person observable or measurable, which the basic toolkit of science relies on. Hence we can't even identify a path to getting an answer to the basic 'how' and 'why' questions, or testing hypotheses. Hence 'The Hard Problem'. To simply ignore things which don't fit our current model isn't scientific, or science could never progress.

If this sort of thing does not satisfy some philosophers, they are free to holler that science can't explain consciousness, and scientists are best advised to just ignore them and keep doing their jobs following the norms and practices they are accustomed to.

There are neuroscientists like Koch trying to get a handle on how we might find ways of approaching the Hard Problem in a scientific, measurable way. Maybe that will get somewhere. It seems to be leading IIT towards panpsychism interestingly.

I'm aware that you believe this would just be turning our backs on a very real and difficult problem. I don't see it that way, obviously. I see it as us turning our backs on a community of very smart people who have deluded themselves about the nature of consciousness and who are not producing works or ideas I find even remotely compelling or interesting. If you find value in this sort of thing, good for you. I'm on a different path.

If you don't have an answer to the question of the nature of consciousness, on what basis do you get to decide what suggestions are deluded?

Gertie wrote: ↑

October 7th, 2020, 1:05 pm

What our current scientific understanding wouldn't predict is how and why experience correlates with certain physical processes at all.

That explanation has already been achieved. For purely ideological reasons, it is not acceptable to some philosophers.

I am satisfied that the Global Neuronal Workspace model (or an evolved version of it as time goes on) is the only explanation one could ever have or expect to explain how brain states are mental states. If this model doesn't scratch an itch that some philosophers have, this is their problem, not my problem, and certainly not a problem for the science of consciousness.

Yet you claim to know (some) brain states *are* experiential states based on correlation. Something we're not in a position to know. It's a hypothesis which requires backing up, because it's only one of several whole cloth hypotheses, and requires an explanation as to how the same identical thing can simultaneously have contradictory properties.

CHAPTER 2.512.

~

thrasymachus on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 2:13 PM



Atla wrote:

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomnologists like Heidegger" don't know what their talking about.

CHAPTER 2.513.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 2:55 PM



Atla wrote:

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

2.512. by thrasymachus

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomenologists like Heidegger" don't know what they're talking about.

👍 Yes, and in addition, I would still like to know how "dualistic philosophy was refuted by science." 👍

CHAPTER 2.514.

~

thrasymachus on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 3:03 PM



Gertie wrote:

Yet you claim to know (some) brain states are experiential states based on correlation. Something we're not in a position to know. It's a hypothesis which requires backing up, because it's only one of several whole cloth hypotheses, and requires an explanation as to how the same identical thing can simultaneously have contradictory properties.

But why is it you think we are not in a position to know that brain states correlate with mental states? Clearly such correlations have been demonstrated in, say, brain surgery that requires patients to be awake so they can report about the mental state that is being excited by a physical stimulus (a probe).

But the problem is not whether or not such states correlate in this way or not. the problem is that, even if a materialist's reduction is right, and, as reductions go, what is REALLY happening when a person smells something, sees it, and the rest, is this actual observable brain activity, this would thereby localize perception, and one would then have to explain how knowledge relationships are possible between subject and object at all. After all, a brain given in the scientist's own conception, a locus of boundaries, a delimited "thing," and unless you want to commit to some kind of "action at a distance," which is a bit like Harry Potter's wand, i.e., an acausal "knowledge event" (is knowledge causal?? Well then, what kind of causal model permits the "distance" between subject and object to be spanned or closed such that S's knowledge of P is actually OF P, and not of its own affairs?), you are bound to an impossibility of ever affirming anything beyond the this brain activity.

The real culprit here is the presumption of science in matters of philosophy.

CHAPTER 2.515.

~

thrasymachus on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 3:28 PM



Faustus5 wrote

What I will ignore is bad philosophy which decides to re-invent the rules for what counts as a scientific explanation without giving good reasons for doing so.

Clearly you don't understand the issue then. You don't know where the boundaries are between empirically confirmed ideas and what those ideas presuppose in their analysis.

A scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is one that describes what physically happens and why, tracing casual connections in a system from beginning to end. Then it is done. So a scientific explanation of a mental state will be one which traces all the causal pathways from brain events to the motor events subjects use to describe what their experiences are like. That's it.

Causal? Is knowledge, that which rises out of the relationship between knower and known, therefore a *causal matter*? If you really think empirical science is the be all and end all is understanding the world, then you at least have to have a working model for empirical science's empirical knowledge. If such knowledge is causal in its nature, then you have to explain how one gets knowledge out of causality.

Remember, the "we're looking into it" approach to this matter will not avail you, for any sophisticated and complicated scientist's view on this presupposes simply causality. That is, you can say, well, there is an object, see the causal connections, from the surface, to the eye, into the cortex and so on, and you can do this with the most detailed neurochemistry available, but if you cannot explain how this train of causality *delivers* the object to mental affairs, then you're just whistling dixy. I mean, you have to have at least a prima facie idea of how causality can satisfy the reaching across distance from one object to another.

I'm aware that you believe this would just be turning our backs on a very real and difficult problem. I don't see it that way, obviously. I see it as us turning our backs on a community of very smart people who have deluded themselves about the nature of consciousness and who are not producing works or ideas I find even remotely compelling or interesting. If you find value in this sort of thing, good for you. I'm on a different path.

I despise delusion as well. Delusion, in the broadest definition, occurs when one believes without justification, a dogmatic adherence to orthodoxy is often in place. Some call your position scientism: empirical science IS the modern orthodoxy, and a move from making great cell phones and computers and dental equipment, to the assumption that this is also what makes for a response to philosophical questions is entirely delusory. Case in point? See the above.

CHAPTER 2.516.

~

Faustus5 on  Monday, October 12, 2020 at 4:00 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.511. by Gertie

Yes we see it differently. As I said, the current physicalist scientific model of what the world is made of and how it works has no place for experience. So if we agree experience exists, that means the model is incomplete.

We agree that experience exists, we just disagree on what it means to explain it, specifically on what is fair to ask of science and what is not.

Someone notices that in stretches of calm weather, sea shells on the beach tend to be sorted by size and shape. They ask why this pattern is formed rather than another.

A scientist who specializes in the physics of fluid turbulence attempts to explain. She goes over how the energy in the waves acts on various bodies depending on their shape, mass, and orientation. This tells a causal story for each kind of shell, perhaps using statistical analysis in some area, or telling a brute deterministic story at other points.

If the person responds with the objection that the question of why this pattern rather than another is on display was never answered by these kinds of narratives, we would (or should) regard the person as confused. The scientist really did answer the question, and there's nothing more to be said. Once you've shown what happens and why in each step of the causal chain, explanation is done.

I feel the same way about neuroanatomical explanations of conscious experience. Why did this pain feel sharp and this one feel dull? Because in one case this kind of nerve was stimulated, and in the other case a different kind of nerve was stimulated. Why does chocolate taste this way, and hot sauce tastes that way? Because chocolate stimulates the following kinds of nerves located here and here and here, activating these kinds of brain areas, whereas hot sauce causes the following activities in these different nerves and brain areas over here and here.

You aren't going to get anything else from brain science, and in my view it is not reasonable to think anything remains to be explained. This is what explaining a conscious experience looks like, and it could never look like anything else.

2.511. by Gertie

I think most would agree we don't know everything, but there is a particular problem re experience, in that it's not third person observable or measurable, which the basic toolkit of science relies on.

As I pointed out earlier, we already have the capacity to observe/measure some aspects of conscious experience from a third person perspective, and the existence of very specific kinds of experiences (visual illusions) have been predicted based on knowledge of how the brain works.

Besides, too much is made out of the first person/third person distinction. In the end the most important thing about the brain events in consciousness is that they are representing features of the world, feeding very specific kinds of information to other systems in the body of an agent. That information flow is not being wired into the same systems of an outside observer. That's all there is to it.

It's like making a big deal out of the way a stream looks like from a helicopter hundreds of meters in the air and what it looks like as you are knocked off your feet once you personally step into its current.

2.511. by Gertie

If you don't have an answer to the question of the nature of consciousness, on what basis do you get to decide what suggestions are deluded?

Except I do indeed think we have an answer to the question on the nature of consciousness, at least in outline, we've had it for decades, and it continues to improve. Sure, some philosophers disagree, but I've yet to see a single reason to take their criticisms seriously.

CHAPTER 2.517.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 5:02 PM

2.512. by thrasymachus

Atla wrote:

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomenologists like Heidegger" don't know what they're talking about.

Phenomenology just seems to be psychology (male psychology actually) and doesn't even address what being/existence actually is.

CHAPTER 2.518.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 5:06 PM

2.513. by Pattern-chaser

@Atla wrote:

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

2.512. by thrasymachus

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomenologists like Heidegger" don't know what they're talking about.

👍 Yes, and in addition, I would still like to know how "*dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.*" 👍

It was shown that the 'contents of the mind' and the 'physical universe' are linked in such a way, that it really makes no sense to consider them two different things.

CHAPTER 2.519.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 5:21 PM

2.513. by *Pattern-chaser*

@Atla wrote:

Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about. And this is nearly 100 years after dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.

2.512. by *thrasymachus*

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomenologists like Heidegger" don't know what they're talking about.

👍 Yes, and in addition, I would still like to know how "*dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.*" 👍

'Separateness' was also refuted, 'thingness' was also refuted. There are no separate things, objects. 'Things' are artifacts of human thinking. No subject-object dichotomy, no I-other dichotomy etc. etc. etc.

It's a big topic, and it takes some dedication to work it all out. Most professional philosophers avoid it like the plague, either because they are idiots, or because they are smart but realize their paychecks depend on keeping Western philosophy intact.

CHAPTER 2.520.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, October 12, 2020 at 6:01 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.515. by *thrasymachus*

Clearly you don't understand the issue then. You don't know where the boundaries are between empirically confirmed ideas and what those ideas presuppose in their analysis.

Perhaps the ideas being presupposed seem perfectly acceptable to me until I hear a good argument questioning them.

2.515. by thrasymachus

Causal? Is knowledge, that which rises out of the relationship between knower and known, therefore a causal matter?

Well, there are entire conversations to have about the use of cultural/institutional norms to evaluate knowledge and what is “best” done with it, but in the context of this discussion, I’m only concerned with the parts of knowledge that are modeled by cognitive neuroscience. The other stuff isn’t relevant (again, in the narrow confines of what I’m discussing in this context).

2.515. by thrasymachus

That is, you can say, well, there is an object, see the causal connections, from the surface, to the eye, into the cortex and so on, and you can do this with the most detailed neurochemistry available, but if you cannot explain how this train of causality delivers the object to mental affairs, then you're just whistling dixy.

That’s exactly what explaining such a thing would look like in the context of this discussion. We aren’t talking about the philosophy of epistemology in this thread, after all, and I don’t think it is terribly relevant. We are talking about the possibilities of a scientific account of consciousness and what it would look like.

2.515. by thrasymachus

Some call your position scientism: empirical science IS the modern orthodoxy, and a move from making great cell phones and computers and dental equipment, to the assumption that this is also what makes for a response to philosophical questions is entirely delusory.

That’s fine if you think this way, but until you can do more than just stamp your feet in protest and instead offer a serious and legitimate critique of a scientific appreciation of consciousness, why should I take you seriously? Throwing the S word around is just pure laziness.

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 2 1 .

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 12:20 PM



Atla wrote: Yep and that's just the way things are. This is the folly of dualistic Western philosophy, and of science trying to do philosophy. Among many others, we have phenomenologists like Heidegger, qualia/consciousness eliminativists like Dennett, all kinds of dual-aspect believers like Chalmers, and not a single one of them actually knows what they are talking about.

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2.512. by thrasymachus

A bold statement. I would like to know how it is that "phenomenologists like Heidegger" don't know what they're talking about.

2.513. by Pattern-chaser

👍 Yes, and in addition, I would still like to know how "*dualistic philosophy was refuted by science.*" 👍

2.518. by Atla

It was shown that the 'contents of the mind' and the 'physical universe' are linked in such a way, that it really makes no sense to consider them two different things.

So they weren't "refuted", but casually dismissed because "it makes no sense". Fair enough.

2.519. by Atla

'Separateness' was also refuted, 'thingness' was also refuted. There are no separate things, objects. 'Things' are artifacts of human thinking. No subject-object dichotomy, no I-other dichotomy etc. etc. etc. etc.

It's a big topic, and it takes some dedication to work it all out. Most professional philosophers avoid it like the plague, either because they are idiots, or because they are smart but realize their paychecks depend on keeping Western philosophy intact.

"Refuted" sounds formal and authoritative. I don't think "separateness" or "thingness" have been formally disproved in any meaningful sense. I don't disagree with what you're saying, but I find the way you are saying it to be confusing and unclear. That's probably my fault....

CHAPTER 2.522.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 4:44 PM

2.521. by Pattern-chaser

2.518. by Atla

It was shown that the 'contents of the mind' and the 'physical universe' are linked in such a way, that it really makes no sense to consider them two different things.

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Is it completely meaningless to say that the existence of the Christian God, or Zeus, or whoever, was disproven? After all, we can't prove a negative.

CHAPTER 2.523.

~

Terrapin Station on  Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 6:17 PM



2.522. by Atla

2.521. by Pattern-chaser

So they weren't "refuted", but casually dismissed because "it makes no sense". Fair enough.

"Refuted" sounds formal and authoritative. I don't think "separateness" or "thingness" have been formally disproved in any meaningful sense. I don't disagree with what you're saying, but I find the way you are saying it to be confusing and unclear. That's probably my fault....

Is it completely meaningless to say that the existence of the Christian God, or Zeus, or whoever, was disproven? After all, we can't prove a negative.

Aside from the usual proof issues with empirical claims, you only can't prove a negative if (a) the domain is limitless and/or (b) for some practical reason it's not possible to exhaust the domain in an examination, and (c) the negative isn't simply incoherent or impossible.

So, for example, we can easily prove a negative when it comes to something like "I do not have a billion dollars in my bank account" because neither (a) nor (b) are the case. We can easily check the bank account and see that there isn't a billion dollars in it.

Or we can easily prove a negative when it comes to something like, "There are no living things in the universe that aren't living things," even though we can't practically check everywhere in the universe, because it's logically contradictory.

Of course, another issue is simply that "negatives" are positives rephrased.

CHAPTER 2.524.

~

Gertie on  Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 7:34 PM

Faustus

Gertie wrote: ↑

October 10th, 2020, 6:36 pm

Yes we see it differently. As I said, the current physicalist scientific model of what the world is made of and how it works has no place for experience. So if we agree experience exists, that means the model is incomplete.

We agree that experience exists, we just disagree on what it means to explain it, specifically on what is fair to ask of science and what is not.

Right.

specifically on what is fair to ask of science and what is not.

Well, it's more a case of what is a legitimate question to me. Whether science (currently, or in principle ever) can explain it is a different issue.

Someone notices that in stretches of calm weather, sea shells on the beach tend to be sorted by size and shape. They ask why this pattern is formed rather than another.

A scientist who specializes in the physics of fluid turbulence attempts to explain. She goes over how the energy in the waves acts on various bodies depending on their shape, mass, and orientation. This tells a causal story for each kind of shell, perhaps using statistical analysis in some area, or telling a brute deterministic story at other points.

If the person responds with the objection that the question of why this pattern rather than another is on display was never answered by these kinds of narratives, we would (or should) regard the person as confused. The scientist really did answer the question, and there's nothing more to be said. Once you've shown what happens and why in each step of the causal chain, explanation is done.

OK. In such instances I'd say that if the scientist had all the necessary info she could give a complete account in principle which was in line with the current scientific model of what the world is made of and how it works. (Of course in practice you can't know every factor in play, but if she did then in principle she could give the correct answer). With experience she couldn't in principle do that.

I feel the same way about neuroanatomical explanations of conscious experience. Why did this pain feel sharp and this one feel dull? Because in one case this kind of nerve was stimulated, and in the other case a different kind of nerve was stimulated. Why does chocolate taste this way, and hot sauce tastes that way? Because chocolate stimulates the following kinds of nerves located here and here and here, activating these kinds of brain areas, whereas hot sauce causes the following activities in these different nerves and brain areas over here and here.

You're talking about what Chalmers calls the Easy Problems, what we can in principle work out as neuroscience progresses. Again the unanswered question lies in why particular nerves correlate with any experiential state *at all*. That's where the explanatory gap lies. It's not a problem for the sea shore scientist, she just needs all the details. This is a problem of not having an explanation for the nature of the relationship between the material stuff/processes and experience (aka the mind-body problem).

You aren't going to get anything else from brain science, and in my view it is not reasonable to think anything remains to be explained. This is what explaining a conscious experience looks like, and it could never look like anything else.

We might not be able to get anything other than further observation of correlation from brain science. That's because as Chalmers says, this isn't a question science seems to have the appropriate toolkit to answer, hence he calls it The Hard Problem. So here's my issue with your position as I understand it -

* I don't see how the mind-body problem not being apparently amenable to the scientific method de-legitimises the question?

* Or allows you to form a conclusion about the mind-body problem, such as Identity Theory being correct? Surely that requires some justification beyond pointing at correlation (as others point to it and come to different conclusions)...

Gertie wrote: ↑

October 10th, 2020, 6:36 pm

I think most would agree we don't know everything, but there is a particular problem re experience, in that it's not third person observable or measurable, which the basic toolkit of science relies on.

As I pointed out earlier, we already have the capacity to observe/measure some aspects of conscious experience from a third person perspective, and the existence of very specific kinds of experiences (visual illusions) have been predicted based on knowledge of how the brain works.

Besides, too much is made out of the first person/third person distinction. In the end the most important thing about the brain events in consciousness is that they are representing features of the world, feeding very specific kinds of information to other systems in the body of an agent. That information flow is not being wired into the same systems of an outside observer. That's all there is to it

It's like making a big deal out of the way a stream looks like from a helicopter hundreds of meters in the air and what it looks like as you are knocked off your feet once you personally step into its current.

You're right that's what's important for how we function day to day. And we understand utility based accounts, that's not a problem. Philosophy shouldn't be parochial and ignore questions which aren't immediately useful. Or easy. And say we came to discover our personal experience is not specific substrate dependant, we might be able to discard our mortal bodies, that looks important! Or when we develop AI which passes the Turing Test, it will be important to know if it genuinely has experience in terms of how we treat it. If panpsychism is true it will revolutionise our relationship with the world. There are plenty of ways that understanding experience is important too.

Re 'First person perspective', that's just a way we describe the 'what it's like' nature of experience. That we've discovered correlation with some physical systems we can inter-subjectively observe is

a helpful clue re the mind-body relationship, but it doesn't tell us what the nature of that relationship is. As is the discrete, unified nature of the field of consciousness, located in a specific place and time, correlated with a specific discrete material body. This shows there is some close mind-body relationship, at least with some physical systems. We know that. But simply noting there are first and third person perspectives explains nothing. All it says is my experience correlates with this stuff here, not that stuff over there - but not how and why.

Gertie wrote: ↑

October 10th, 2020, 6:36 pm

If you don't have an answer to the question of the nature of consciousness, on what basis do you get to decide what suggestions are deluded?

Except I do indeed think we have an answer to the question on the nature of consciousness, at least in outline, we've had it for decades, and it continues to improve. Sure, some philosophers disagree, but I've yet to see a single reason to take their criticisms seriously.

You mean that we've noted correlation between specific experiential states and some specific material processes? I could note that when I lift my coffee cup with my hand, the cup rises. That could mean my arm is made of anti gravity, or a special field arises when my hand interacts with coffee cups, or a million things. But in fact there is one correct explanation, which explains the correlation. *Correlation itself isn't the explanation.*

CHAPTER 2.525.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 8:02 PM

thras

Gertie wrote:

Yet you claim to know (some) brain states are experiential states based on correlation. Something we're not in a position to know. It's a hypothesis which requires backing up, because it's only one of several whole cloth hypotheses, and requires an explanation as to how the same identical thing can simultaneously have contradictory properties.

But why is it you think we are not in a position to know that brain states correlate with mental states? Clearly such correlations have been demonstrated in, say, brain surgery that requires patients to be awake so they can report about the mental state that is being excited by a physical stimulus (a probe).

You simply misunderstood me there. You're right we do know some experiential states correlate with specific brain states, and I assume that will continue to hold as we discover more details. I was challenging the Identity Theory explanation for that correlation.

But the problem is not whether or not such states correlate in this way or not. the problem is that, even if a materialist's reduction is right, and, as reductions go, what is REALLY happening when a person smells something, sees it, and the rest, is this actual observable brain activity, this would thereby localize perception, and one would then have to explain how knowledge relationships are possible between subject and object at all. After all, a brain given in the scientist's own conception, a locus of boundaries, a delimited "thing," and unless you want to commit to some kind of "action at a distance," which is a bit like Harry Potter's wand, i.e., an acausal "knowledge event" (is knowledge causal?? Well then, what kind of causal model permits the "distance" between subject and object to be spanned or closed such that S's knowledge of P is actually OF P, and not of its own affairs?), you are bound to an impossibility of ever affirming anything beyond the this brain activity.

I think a materialist reductionist could argue this is a novel emergent property of material processes which isn't currently accounted for in our materialist model. How such a materialist could explain this is a problem, I agree. Likewise how they could demonstrate the truth of such a claim.

CHAPTER 2.526.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 10:55 AM



2.522. by Atla

2.521. by Pattern-chaser

So they weren't "refuted", but casually dismissed because "it makes no sense". Fair enough.

"Refuted" sounds formal and authoritative. I don't think "separateness" or "thingness" have been formally disproved in any meaningful sense. I don't disagree with what you're saying, but I find the way you are saying it to be confusing and unclear. That's probably my fault....

Is it completely meaningless to say that the existence of the Christian God, or Zeus, or whoever, was disproven?

Not meaningless, no. It would be wrong to say so.


2.522. by Atla

After all, we can't prove a negative.

Exactly so.

CHAPTER 2.527.

~

Sculptor1 on  Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 1:22 PM



2.522. by Atla

After all, we can't prove a negative.

Proving a negative is possible, but depends on what it is.

When a person gives a full definition of a thing, what ever that is, it is possible to disprove it. Even if it does not exist.

You do it by unpacking everything that is said and demonstrating that such a thing is impossible, incoherent, or irrational.

It is possible to prove a negative.

If I say there is no biscuits left in the biscuit tin, I can prove that by demonstrating the existence of the negative space where they were earlier.

If you are saying that god cannot be disproven, in this way, you are asserting that god does not exist in the first place.

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 2 8 .

~

Atla on  Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 3:38 PM

2.526. by Pattern-chaser

2.522. by Atla

Is it completely meaningless to say that the existence of the Christian God, or Zeus, or whoever, was disproven?

Not meaningless, no. It would be wrong to say so.

2.522. by Atla

After all, we can't prove a negative.

Exactly so.

I don't think that's a useful approach. Technically, anything can be doubted*, we can never 100% prove or disprove stuff. So if we stick to this approach, then isn't all proof and disproof rendered pointless, doesn't all discourse come to a dead end?

(*except that there is something rather than absolutely nothing)

CHAPTER 2.529.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 3:58 PM

2.516. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

I feel the same way about neuroanatomical explanations of conscious experience. Why did this pain feel sharp and this one feel dull? Because in one case this kind of nerve was stimulated, and in the other case a different kind of nerve was stimulated. Why does chocolate taste this way, and hot sauce tastes that way? Because chocolate stimulates the following kinds of nerves located here and here and here, activating these kinds of brain areas, whereas hot sauce causes the following activities in these different nerves and brain areas over here and here.

How can you tell based on a third person perspective, that pain actually feels like anything, or that chocolate actually tastes like anything? How can you infer that based on the observed activity of nerves and brain areas?

CHAPTER 2.530.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 4:32 PM



2.528. by Atla

2.526. by Pattern-chaser

Not meaningless, no. It would be wrong to say so.

Exactly so.

I don't think that's a useful approach. Technically, anything can be doubted, we can never 100% prove or disprove stuff.*

*(*except that there is something rather than absolutely nothing)*

OK, agreed.

2.528. by Atla

So if we stick to this approach, then isn't all proof and disproof rendered pointless, doesn't all discourse come to a dead end?

Yes; no. Proof and disproof has always been pointless, for the reasons you observe. And yet discourse can continue more or less as normal. The only problem arises when someone cannot resist the siren call of certainty, and they start to look for ways to be certain, to prove and disprove

stuff, to know, without doubt. If we accept uncertainty, openly, consciously and knowingly, we can discourse widely, I think.

CHAPTER 2.531.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:22 PM

2.530. by Pattern-chaser

2.528. by Atla

I don't think that's a useful approach. Technically, anything can be doubted, we can never 100% prove or disprove stuff.*

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Can't tell if you are agreeing or disagreeing with me or disagreeing with yourself or whatever. Obviously proof and disproof aren't about absolute certainty, absolute certainty is for the delusional.

CHAPTER 2.532.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:38 PM

2.531. by Atla

Can't tell if you are agreeing or disagreeing with me or disagreeing with yourself or whatever. Obviously proof and disproof aren't about absolute certainty, absolute certainty is for the delusional.



Going by your final six words. I think we agree pretty closely. ;)

CHAPTER 2.533.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:55 PM

2.532. by Pattern-chaser

2.531. by Atla

*Can't tell if you are agreeing or disagreeing with me or disagreeing with yourself or whatever.
Obviously proof and disproof aren't about absolute certainty, absolute certainty is for the delusional.*

Going by your final six words. I think we agree pretty closely. ;)

Ok, so: dualistic philosophy, separateness, 'thing'-ness etc. were pretty much refuted. Well, one can still come up with pretty insane ideas without evidence, to make dualistic philosophy work. And one can say that separateness was only partially refuted, or that its refutation is inherently circular. The idea of 'thing'-ness, and the subject/object dichotomy, were so thoroughly beaten into oblivion though that it's not even funny.

CHAPTER 2.534.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 6:49 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.524. by Gertie

Again the unanswered question lies in why particular nerves correlate with any experiential state at all. That's where the explanatory gap lies.

And my position remains that the neuroanatomical accounts I describe do indeed answer any reasonably formed questions you could have in mind, and that the hard problem is just a phantom that can and should be dismissed as a artifact of bad philosophy. Solving the "easy" problems is all anyone will ever do, and that's enough.

Where you see a deep mystery which I'm just turning my back on, I see a problem that has been invented by philosophers who defined the issue so that it is literally impossible to explain in a satisfactory manner. I see no value in that kind of thing.

CHAPTER 2.535.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 6:58 PM





2.529. by Atla

How can you tell based on a third person perspective, that pain actually feels like anything, or that chocolate actually tastes like anything? How can you infer that based on the observed activity of nerves and brain areas?

By studying the brains of thousands of very different subjects as they describe various sorts of experiences, finding out what causal pathways lead from stimuli to brain activity, to motor outputs, and looking for commonalities among all subjects and the reports they make of their experiences. Once a rich data set is collected of this sort of thing, we will reach a point where scientists would be able to tell from a brain scan whether a subject is (for example) tasting chocolate versus kimchi, to what kind of chocolate they are tasting and how spicy the kimchi is. We can already, in primitive form, do something like this right now.

That still leaves a lot out, though--but for reasons that are pragmatic and not metaphysical. For instance, your tasting of kimchi might trigger very personal memories of, for example, a really bad date you went on where you first ate the stuff. This will make your experience different in ways that would be impossible for this kind of scientific project to detect.

CHAPTER 2.536.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 11:24 PM

2.534. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.524. by Gertie

Again the unanswered question lies in why particular nerves correlate with any experiential state at all. That's where the explanatory gap lies.

And my position remains that the neuroanatomical accounts I describe do indeed answer any reasonably formed questions you could have in mind, and that the hard problem is just a phantom that can and should be dismissed as an artifact of bad philosophy. Solving the "easy" problems is all anyone will ever do, and that's enough.

Where you see a deep mystery which I'm just turning my back on, I see a problem that has been invented by philosophers who defined the issue so that it is literally impossible to explain in a satisfactory manner. I see no value in that kind of thing.

The mind-body problem is straightforward enough to grasp. And it's obviously legitimate to ask what the nature of that relationship is.

Your response is science can only note correlations in this case, and therefore trying to explain the

relationship is "bad philosophy". While also claiming the opposite, that you know the answer, which is the philosophical hypothesis of materialist Identity Theory...

CHAPTER 2.537.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 2:35 AM

2.508. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.492. by *Gertie*

It's not an ideology to ask for an explanation.

But it is an ideology to ignore an explanation when it is given.

2.492. by *Gertie*

You of course can choose to ignore anything not obviously explicable by science, but there's no reason philosophy should.

What I will ignore is bad philosophy which decides to re-invent the rules for what counts as a scientific explanation without giving good reasons for doing so.

A scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is one that describes what physically happens and why, tracing casual connections in a system from beginning to end. Then it is done. So a scientific explanation of a mental state will be one which traces all the causal pathways from brain events to the motor events subjects use to describe what their experiences are like. That's it.

No, that is not an explanation of a *mental state*. It is an explanation of a physical system. The observations you describe will predict how that system will behave; it won't tell us a thing about what that system experiences --- what it senses and feels, or if it feels anything at all.

Perhaps we need a reminder of what an explanation --- scientific or otherwise --- is. It is, in short, a set of propositions relating a phenomenon or event --- an *effect* --- to some antecedent complex or sequence of phenomena or events, its *causes*. Any such set of propositions is a *theory* of that phenomenon. A theory *explains* the phenomenon in question if, and only if, it allows us to reliably *predict* that effect from the given antecedent phenomenon.

A neurophysiological explanation of consciousness will allow us to predict that biological systems of a certain design will manifest the behavioral indicators of consciousness, but it won't allow us to predict what any particular physical stimulus will feel like to the stimulated system, or whether it will feel anything at all. E.g., it won't allow Mary, or us, to predict what red will look like when she leaves her black & white room, or what cinnamon will taste like to someone other than ourselves. That is the "explanatory gap."

Now there is an inductive leap involved here --- we cannot possibly doubt that we ourselves experience a distinct, unique sensation when our optic nerves deliver signals to our brains

indicating light reflected from a red rose is stimulating them, or when a certain complex of chemicals excites our gustatory and olfactory nerves. But we can rationally doubt that other people also experience something (roughly) similar when similarly stimulated. Nonetheless, we confidently assume they do.

If they do, then we have a universal effect manifested by physical systems of a certain design which no theory of neurophysiology can fully explain --- because it cannot predict those effects, which are not identical to physiological events we are pretty confident are their causes (at least, not without inventing some eclectic and undefined meaning of "identity").

CHAPTER 2.538.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 3:06 AM

2.535. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.529. by *Atla*

How can you tell based on a third person perspective, that pain actually feels like anything, or that chocolate actually tastes like anything? How can you infer that based on the observed activity of nerves and brain areas?

By studying the brains of thousands of very different subjects as they describe various sorts of experiences, finding out what causal pathways lead from stimuli to brain activity, to motor outputs, and looking for commonalities among all subjects and the reports they make of their experiences. Once a rich data set is collected of this sort of thing, we will reach a point where scientists would be able to tell from a brain scan whether a subject is (for example) tasting chocolate versus kimchi, to what kind of chocolate they are tasting and how spicy the kimchi is. We can already, in primitive form, do something like this right now.

That still leaves a lot out, though--but for reasons that are pragmatic and not metaphysical. For instance, your tasting of kimchi might trigger very personal memories of, for example, a really bad date you went on where you first ate the stuff. This will make your experience different in ways that would be impossible for this kind of scientific project to detect.

Sure, but how can you tell that those feels and tastes that the subjects describe, actually exist? How does science measure experience itself?

CHAPTER 2.539.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 11:47 AM



2.531. by Atla

Obviously proof and disproof aren't about absolute certainty, absolute certainty is for the delusional.

2.532. by Pattern-chaser

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2.533. by Atla

Ok, so: dualistic philosophy, separateness, 'thing'-ness etc. were pretty much refuted. Well, one can still come up with pretty insane ideas without evidence, to make dualistic philosophy work. And one can say that separateness was only partially refuted, or that its refutation is inherently circular. The idea of 'thing'-ness, and the subject/object dichotomy, were so thoroughly beaten into oblivion though that it's not even funny.

No, "refuted" means "disproven", and these things have not been proven or disproven. And "proven" - unqualified; without context - does give us "absolute certainty", although the prefix is approaching overkill. Things like dualism lost the consensus, and most of us accepted and agreed that dualism is not a great way of looking at things. This is the way our conclusions are differently-expressed once we accept that certainty is a dream. So we do agree, but I still prefer a more honest way of expressing and acknowledging the more, er, tentative nature of what we *actually know*. Nothing was "beaten into oblivion" - we have abandoned certainty as a bad idea, yes? But we have managed to select certain ideas over others because they're more useful, a state that could change in the future, as science does when new data becomes available. For now, we know of no useful application for dualistic ideas; can we agree on that? I think we can. 👍😊

CHAPTER 2.540.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 2:11 PM

2.539. by Pattern-chaser

No, "refuted" means "disproven", and these things have not been proven or disproven. And "proven" - unqualified; without context - does give us "absolute certainty", although the prefix is approaching overkill. Things like dualism lost the consensus, and most of us accepted and agreed that dualism is not a great way of looking at things. This is the way our conclusions are differently-expressed once we accept that certainty is a dream. So we do agree, but I still prefer a more honest way of expressing and acknowledging the more, er, tentative nature of what we *actually know*. Nothing was "beaten into oblivion" - we have abandoned certainty as a bad idea, yes? But we have managed to select certain ideas over others because they're more useful, a state that could change in the future, as science does when new data becomes available. For now, we know of no useful application for dualistic ideas; can we agree on that? I think we can. 👍😊

"Proven" unqualified doesn't give us "absolute certainty" in any intelligent conversation, I'd say claiming that it does, merely insults people's intelligence.

The other problem is that you seem to have very little idea about some of the more recent scientific discoveries, which had major implications for philosophy. I'd say 90%+ of people on philosophy forums have very little idea, so that's a common issue. By disproven/refuted I did mean disproven/refuted (no absolute certainty talk), but we could start at least 5 more topics based on the few things a listed, and there's more.

CHAPTER 2.541.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 6:04 PM

2.524. by Gertie

Faustus5 wrote: It's like making a big deal out of the way a stream looks like from a helicopter hundreds of meters in the air and what it looks like as you are knocked off your feet once you personally step into its current.

No, it isn't. That is a perspectival difference. Differences due to perspective --- looking at a given phenomena from different viewpoints --- are transformable into one another by simple algorithms or methods. E.g., you can perceive the stream from your latter viewpoint by jumping out of the helicopter into the stream. No such method is available for transforming the sensations experienced by Alfie when presented with a certain sensory stimulus into observations Bruno might make of Alfie's brain while that is happening. There is no way for Bruno to put himself in Alfie's position, to see what Alfie is seeing at that moment, as there is with your helicopter observer. Calling that difference a "difference in perspective" is perhaps a convenient and comforting analysis of the problem, but it is incorrect. It is hand-waving.

Gertie wrote: You're right that's what's important for how we function day to day. And we understand utility based accounts, that's not a problem. Philosophy shouldn't be parochial and ignore questions which aren't immediately useful. Or easy. And say we came to discover our personal experience is not specific substrate dependant, we might be able to discard our mortal bodies, that looks important! Or when we develop AI which passes the Turing Test, it will be important to know if it genuinely has experience in terms of how we treat it. If panpsychism is true it will revolutionise our relationship with the world. There are plenty of ways that understanding experience is important too.

I'm a bit mystified by your apparent attraction to panpsychism. First, I'm not sure why you might think it even counts as an explanation for mental phenomena, that it solves the "Hard Problem." How does "everything has experience" explain why Alfie has experience? Panpsychism enlarges the problem; it doesn't solve it.

And, of course, that theory, which entails predictions that are unconfirmable and unfalsifiable, is vacuous, as devoid of explanatory power as "goddidit."

What attracts you to it?

~

Gertie on 🕒 Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 11:57 PM

GE

I just don't have a bias against panpsychism. I suspect our attraction to monism might be more about us than the way the universe necessarily has to be. Monism is tidy, and unity is 'elegant' and satisfying, but maybe it's just us bringing those type of criteria to the table.

Then there's the Hard Problem. If experience is fundamental its existence and nature doesn't need explaining (except in terms of why is there something rather than nothing). What is still left unexplained is the details of the mind-body relationship, but with panpsychism perhaps a science of consciousness becomes potentially doable, like IIT is trying to come up with.

I don't write off Atla's monist Idealism position either, if we're going for monism why not go with the substance we directly know exists, rather than go with the substance it presents as a representative model? It's a fair point.

Basically my position is we don't know enough to claim we can have an answer. So I'm very open-minded in principle, but very sceptical of any specific claim. Saying "I don't know" is the only justifiable current position imo, when no one claim can answer the basic question "How *can* you know?". As we know more I suspect the direction of travel will be away from materialism as we currently think of it. QM is the latest paradigmatic shift which challenges us to re-think the underlying fundamental nature of reality, who knows what is still unknown.

You rightly point out the best we're likely to achieve is a model (our perceptual and cognitive toolkit is limited and flawed, and QM challenges even our notion of basic logic as reliable). The map-territory problem is perhaps only strictly escapable ultimately in an unsatisfying solipsism. But we should still strive for better maps and philosophically examine their strengths and weaknesses. Currently I think philosophy of mind is mostly stuck brainstorming the problem with whole cloth 'What Ifs...' It's the next step (comparing/weighing/testing/even criteria for consensus) which the nature of the problem makes trickier.

Monist materialism as described by physics seems to have hit an impasse with experience, the Hard Problem is real regardless of your preferred explanation. It might be an opportunity to re-think the map. Deciding/testing how to update the map is the problem. Either experience is reducible (or otherwise explainable) in terms of materialism or it isn't. So far at least it demonstrably isn't. I don't think neuroscience or AI will give us that answer for reasons I've mentioned before, but we should keep trying and see what happens.

What bugs me is people claiming to know an answer they clearly can't know. That's what smacks of ideology to me. You at least understand the problems and go beyond one sentence 'explanations', and that turns out to be ridiculously rare for a philosophy board.

CHAPTER 2.543.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, October 16, 2020 at 3:15 AM

2.542. by Gertie

I don't write off Atla's monist Idealism position either, if we're going for monism why not go with the substance we directly know exists, rather than go with the substance it presents as a representative model? It's a fair point.

I'm not really a monist, not an idealist and reject substance theory. The issues are subtle: Western monism, idealism and panpsychism are still subtle forms of dualistic thinking for various reasons. And substance theory is just ancient nonsense.

Think of it this way: if we go in the direction of 'monistic panpsychism', and then go through it, leave the scope of Western philosophy altogether, and still keep going, our views eventually collapse into the rather Eastern version of nondualism I subscribe to.

It's actually even more complicated than that, because first we arrive at the 'monistic' nondualism that most people subscribe to, but we have to still keep going forward and finally arrive at the lesser known 'non-monistic' nondualism (I haven't seen it categorized better yet). It's the only worldview I know of that's naturally compatible with all of science and also automatically solves things like the Hard problem etc.

CHAPTER 2.544.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Friday, October 16, 2020 at 11:48 AM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.538. by Atla

Sure, but how can you tell that those feels and tastes that the subjects describe, actually exist? How does science measure experience itself?

If subjects report specific feels and tastes and we see, via brain imaging, the kinds of brain activities typically measured when other subjects report the same feels and tastes, we would have no justifiable reason for thinking the subject is lying or delusional.

CHAPTER 2.545.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, October 16, 2020 at 4:07 PM

2.544. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.538. by Atla

Sure, but how can you tell that those feels and tastes that the subjects describe, actually exist? How does science measure experience itself?

If subjects report specific feels and tastes and we see, via brain imaging, the kinds of brain activities typically measured when other subjects report the same feels and tastes, we would have no justifiable reason for thinking the subject is lying or delusional.

It's not about lies or delusions, we can assume that the subjects are sane and honest.

We measure the brain activity, but how does it follow from that, that those feels and tastes actually exist? Maybe they all just behave as if they were experiencing feels and tastes, but actually they aren't.

If we invoke Occam's razor, well the idea of those alleged feels and tastes is unnecessary, it has no explanatory value, and they are undetectable by neuroscience, so why don't we just conclude that they are made up woo?

CHAPTER 2.546.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Friday, October 16, 2020 at 4:11 PM

2.545. by Atla

We measure the brain activity, but how does it follow from that, that those feels and tastes actually exist? Maybe they all just behave as if they were experiencing feels and tastes, but actually they aren't.

For one, we're not talking about robots researching this stuff, we're talking about other humans researching it. Other humans who have tastes and feels and who can see what sort of brain states (from a third-person perspective) those amount to.

CHAPTER 2.547.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 1:04 AM



2.546. by Terrapin Station

For one, we're not talking about robots researching this stuff, we're talking about other humans researching it. Other humans who have tastes and feels and who can see what sort of brain states (from a third-person perspective) those amount to.

Third parties observing brain states can see that there is a *correlation* between those states and the (reported) tastes and feels. They cannot conclude that those (inferred) tastes and feels "amount to" those brain states, i.e., that they are identical. That conclusion is gratuitous.

There is no third-party *perspective* on those tastes and feels.

CHAPTER 2.548.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 2:21 AM

2.542. by Gertie

I just don't have a bias against panpsychism. I suspect our attraction to monism might be more about us than the way the universe necessarily has to be. Monism is tidy, and unity is 'elegant' and satisfying, but maybe it's just us bringing those type of criteria to the table.

Well, I agree with your assessment of monism. In my view it is as wrong-headed as dualism. Any view that strives to "reduce" existents to one or a few "basic" or "fundamental" substances is wrong-headed; there is no need for any "basic" substances, and efforts to identify and characterize them only lead to dead-ends.

We have to keep in mind that all ontological theories are conceptual constructs --- verbal structures we can use to communicate information about, and explain, our experiences. Explanation consists in noting relationships and regularities that permit us to predict future experience. We're entirely free to postulate as many existents or categories of existents as we wish, none of which need be any more "basic" than any other --- whatever works to improve our ability to anticipate (and thus control) future experience.

I also agree that we "bring unity to the table." That demand, that whatever entities and processes we postulate exhibit some coherence, some unity, is built into our conceptual apparatus; it is what Kant called the "unity of apperception." Unity is also an axiom of ITT, with regard to percepts. But it extends to concepts also. We don't like "nomological danglers" --- phenomena that seem to have no relationships to anything else. (Term popularized in J. C. C. Smart's classic paper, "Sensations and Brain Processes":

[https://fewd.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/use ... review.pdf](https://fewd.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/use...review.pdf)

But unity does not presume, or require, a "basic substance." A correlative/causative relationship

between brain processes and mental phenomena is sufficient to unify them.

The utility of a theory, however, is a function of its explanatory power --- the extent to which it permits us to predict future experience. A theory that postulates phenomena forever inaccessible to observation --- to experience -- has no explanatory power.

Then there's the Hard Problem. If experience is fundamental its existence and nature doesn't need explaining (except in terms of why is there something rather than nothing). What is still left unexplained is the details of the mind-body relationship, but with panpsychism perhaps a science of consciousness becomes potentially doable, like IIT is trying to come up with.

I agree with Tononi (and Kant, of course) that experience is fundamental, in the sense that it is the raw material, the starting point, of all conceptualizing and theorizing. But being fundamental in that sense doesn't imply that it is universal, or a "basic" substance or constituent of the universe at large. It is only fundamental for conscious creatures endeavoring to explain their experience. To be sure, any such explanation requires an external world --- but one we can never experience directly, and thus are in no position to speculate on what might be its "basic" components or structure. All we can do is construct theories that help us better predict and control our own experiences

CHAPTER 2.549.

~

Terrapin Station on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 12:26 PM



2.547. by GE Morton

2.546. by Terrapin Station

For one, we're not talking about robots researching this stuff, we're talking about other humans researching it. Other humans who have tastes and feels and who can see what sort of brain states (from a third-person perspective) those amount to.

Third parties observing brain states can see that there is a correlation between those states and the (reported) tastes and feels. They cannot conclude that those (inferred) tastes and feels "amount to" those brain states, i.e., that they are identical. That conclusion is gratuitous.

There is no third-party perspective on those tastes and feels.

They can conclude that, especially because there's not only no evidence of anything else, but the other ideas floated for it are incoherent.

CHAPTER 2.550.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 6:45 PM

Gertie wrote: ↑

October 15th, 2020, 7:57 pm

I just don't have a bias against panpsychism. I suspect our attraction to monism might be more about us than the way the universe necessarily has to be. Monism is tidy, and unity is 'elegant' and satisfying, but maybe it's just us bringing those type of criteria to the table.

Well, I agree with your assessment of monism. In my view it is as wrong-headed as dualism. Any view that strives to "reduce" existents to one or a few "basic" or "fundamental" substances is wrong-headed; there is no need for any "basic" substances, and efforts to identify and characterize them only lead to dead-ends.

We have to keep in mind that all ontological theories are conceptual constructs --- verbal structures we can use to communicate information about, and explain, our experiences. Explanation consists in noting relationships and regularities that permit us to predict future experience. We're entirely free to postulate as many existents or categories of existents as we wish, none of which need be any more "basic" than any other --- whatever works to improve our ability to anticipate (and thus control) future experience.

That's true. But Philosophy of Mind has to take certain things as implicit in order to provide a framework for discussing the issue. It mostly roughly assumes there is a real world we share, we can know things about (in a flawed and limited way), about brains, evolution and so on. Otherwise if we end up questioning every thing, we ultimately end up in the dead end of solipsism, with absolutely everything else being utility based. (A problem which I think Idealism has to face, in its rejection of materialism).

As long as we realise we're dealing with a flawed and limited model which we also model ourselves as inhabiting, we can coherently categorise existents, infer causality from patterns, identify reducibility and so on. And also recognise what we've learned about our own flaws and biases from the model.

So when we compare notes inter-subjectively about our shared model, we can come up with a materialist model whereby material stuff is reducible, and interacts based on forces. And note this model doesn't account for experience. Which results in concepts like substance dualism or panpsychism, or identity theory. These concepts give us a handle on how to adjust our model to include all existents and their relationships. But that this is a model should always be the caveat.

I also agree that we "bring unity to the table." That demand, that whatever entities and processes we postulate exhibit some coherence, some unity, is built into our conceptual apparatus; it is what Kant called the "unity of apperception." Unity is also an axiom of IIT, with regard to percepts. But it extends to concepts also. We don't like "nomological danglers" --- phenomena that seem to have no relationships to anything else. (Term popularized in J. C. Smart's classic paper, "Sensations and Brain Processes":

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But unity does not presume, or require, a "basic substance." A correlative/causative relationship between brain processes and mental phenomena is sufficient to unify them.

How so? There has to be something which is a relationship with another something, a relationship isn't a thing in itself.

The utility of a theory, however, is a function of its explanatory power --- the extent to which it permits us to predict future experience. A theory that postulates phenomena forever inaccessible to observation --- to experience -- has no explanatory power.

Then we say we don't know. There is a state of affairs regardless of us knowing it. If we accept material stuff exists (as something other than experience), and experience exists, we can say we observe a correlated relationship, and also that we can't explain the nature of that relationship within our (current) model.

Then there's the Hard Problem. If experience is fundamental its existence and nature doesn't need explaining (except in terms of why is there something rather than nothing). What is still left unexplained is the details of the mind-body relationship, but with panpsychism perhaps a science of consciousness becomes potentially doable, like IIT is trying to come up with.

I agree with Tononi (and Kant, of course) that experience is fundamental, in the sense that it is the raw material, the starting point, of all conceptualizing and theorizing. But being fundamental in that sense doesn't imply that it is universal, or a "basic" substance or constituent of the universe at large.

Right. Those are two different issues, epistemological and ontological. We need to be clear which we're talking about. I think you and I diverge here, I see you sometimes blurring that, re AI for example, while at other times talking as if brains etc are real/material stuff. I'm thinking which framework we're using at any time needs to be explicitly stated, and divergences signalled.

It is only fundamental for conscious creatures endeavoring to explain their experience. To be sure, any such explanation requires an external world --- but one we can never experience directly, and thus are in no position to speculate on what might be its "basic" components or structure. All we can do is construct theories that help us better predict and control our own experiences

But to do so we use a model of stuff and processes. If our notion of what stuff and processes are changes (via better technology/more knowledge/paradigmatic conceptual shifts/whatever), our

explanations change, and we have better explanations which we have reason to believe better represents the actual ontological state of affairs.

Without checking in on that ontological actual state of affairs in the 'real world' beyond our experience, I think (not sure) all roads inevitably to lead to solipsism and simply 'acting as if' a real world exists beyond 'my' experience.

CHAPTER 2.551.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 8:16 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.545. by Atla

We measure the brain activity, but how does it follow from that, that those feels and tastes actually exist? Maybe they all just behave as if they were experiencing feels and tastes, but actually they aren't.

Until someone puts together a convincing reason to think this makes any sense at all and is a plausible scenario, it can safely be dismissed as nonsense only a philosopher would dream up.

CHAPTER 2.552.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 8:18 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.547. by GE Morton

Third parties observing brain states can see that there is a correlation between those states and the (reported) tastes and feels. They cannot conclude that those (inferred) tastes and feels "amount to" those brain states, i.e., that they are identical. That conclusion is gratuitous.

That conclusion, far from being gratuitous, is the only reasonable conclusion a scientifically literate person whose views haven't been contaminated by silly metaphysics would ever come to.

CHAPTER 2.553.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 3:43 AM

2.551. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.545. by Atla

We measure the brain activity, but how does it follow from that, that those feels and tastes actually exist? Maybe they all just behave as if they were experiencing feels and tastes, but actually they aren't.

Until someone puts together a convincing reason to think this makes any sense at all and is a plausible scenario, it can safely be dismissed as nonsense only a philosopher would dream up.

Okay so we can sum up you position as:

- only idiotic philosophers would dismiss the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)
- only idiotic philosophers would believe in the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)

Dennett logic for the win..

CHAPTER 2.554.

~

Sy Borg on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 4:01 AM



2.553. by Atla

2.551. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Until someone puts together a convincing reason to think this makes any sense at all and is a plausible scenario, it can safely be dismissed as nonsense only a philosopher would dream up.

Okay so we can sum up you position as:

- only idiotic philosophers would dismiss the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)
- only idiotic philosophers would believe in the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)

That would leave only one sensible option: to remain on the fence.

Personally, I agree with the first statement, although in less pejorative terms. (These kinds of debates can be as much a matter of definition as perception). Still, I see the dismissal of qualia is ungrounded thinking because, arguably, the most basic fact of existence is that we are conscious, that we experience our existence.

CHAPTER 2.555.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 12:03 PM



2.539. by Pattern-chaser

No, "refuted" means "disproven", and these things have not been proven or disproven. And "proven" - unqualified; without context - does give us "absolute certainty", although the prefix is approaching overkill. Things like dualism lost the consensus, and most of us accepted and agreed that dualism is not a great way of looking at things. This is the way our conclusions are differently-expressed once we accept that certainty is a dream. So we do agree, but I still prefer a more honest way of expressing and acknowledging the more, er, tentative nature of what we actually know. Nothing was "beaten into oblivion" - we have abandoned certainty as a bad idea, yes? But we have managed to select certain ideas over others because they're more useful, a state that could change in the future, as science does when new data becomes available. For now, we know of no useful application for dualistic ideas; can we agree on that? I think we can. 👍😊

2.540. by Atla

"Proven" unqualified doesn't give us "absolute certainty" in any intelligent conversation, I'd say claiming that it does, merely insults people's intelligence.

The other problem is that you seem to have very little idea about some of the more recent scientific discoveries, which had major implications for philosophy. I'd say 90%+ of people on philosophy forums have very little idea, so that's a common issue. By disproven/refuted I did mean disproven/refuted (no absolute certainty talk), but we could start at least 5 more topics based on the few things a listed, and there's more.

You oppose my position with emotional attacks, and vague promises of evidence that is not presented or identified? No philosophical response seems called-for.

It appears this exchange is over, and I have not learned, as I hoped to, how dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have 'been refuted'. Shame. 😞

CHAPTER 2.556.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 1:34 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.553. by Atla

Okay so we can sum up you position as:

- only idiotic philosophers would dismiss the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)
- only idiotic philosophers would believe in the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)

Dennett logic for the win..

You love making up crap, don't you?

I get it; it's literally all you have left.

CHAPTER 2.557.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 2:16 PM

2.552. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.547. by *GE Morton*

Third parties observing brain states can see that there is a correlation between those states and the (reported) tastes and feels. They cannot conclude that those (inferred) tastes and feels "amount to" those brain states, i.e., that they are identical. That conclusion is gratuitous.

That conclusion, far from being gratuitous, is the only reasonable conclusion a scientifically literate person whose views haven't been contaminated by silly metaphysics would ever come to.

In a previous exchange you wrote, "Golly gee wilikers, maybe this is a clue that when it comes to mind/brain identity, the difficulty of the issue comes from mistakenly thinking we should be using common definitions of identity. Did this thought ever occur to you? Perhaps consciousness is the one area where thinking "normally" about identity is the very thing that trips people up."

Whereupon I asked you, if you are eschewing the common definitions of "identity," what definition you *are* using, what criteria must be satisfied in order to pronounce two apparently different things to be identical.

You have yet to answer that question.

There is no metaphysics involved in denying that mental states and brain states are identical, BTW. It is a straightforward, strictly empirical observation (assuming the common definitions of "identity," of course).

CHAPTER 2.558.

~

Atla on  Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 3:40 PM

2.555. by Pattern-chaser

You oppose my position with emotional attacks, and vague promises of evidence that is not presented or identified? No philosophical response seems called-for.

It appears this exchange is over, and I have not learned, as I hoped to, how dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have 'been refuted'. Shame. 😞

Emotional posts are your thing, and I haven't promised you anything in this topic. Your position was a bunch of standard platitudes, getting up to date with metaphysics actually requires some dedication and hard work, and even then many people can't grasp what the experimental results seem to be telling us. I'm not just talking about QM here but it's certainly a central issue.

CHAPTER 2.559.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 3:41 PM

2.556. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.553. by Atla

Okay so we can sum up you position as:

- only idiotic philosophers would dismiss the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)*
- only idiotic philosophers would believe in the existence of qualia (such as feels and tastes)*

Dennett logic for the win..

You love making up crap, don't you?

I get it; it's literally all you have left.

This is all your crap and I find it truly pathetic how you are trying to blame it on me.

CHAPTER 2.560.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 4:20 PM

2.555. by Pattern-chaser

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2.558. by Atla

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Instead of attacking my ignorance, etc., why not explain, with examples, and maybe links too, **how**, **when** and **by whom** dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have been "refuted", as you claim?

CHAPTER 2.561.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 4:28 PM



2.558. by Atla

*[G]etting up to date with **metaphysics** actually requires some dedication and hard work, and even then many people can't grasp what the **experimental results** seem to be telling us. I'm not just talking about **QM** here but it's certainly a central issue.*

What **metaphysical experiments** are these? Mostly, it's not possible to carry out experiments on metaphysics. Metaphysics is generally not the sort of stuff you can illuminate by experiment. **QM** isn't metaphysics, it's science. Or it was when I used Schrodinger's wave equation many years ago, to analyse the tunnelling of electrons through an insulating barrier. QM raises philosophical questions, yes. But it is still the best scientific theory we've ever created.

CHAPTER 2.562.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 4:30 PM

2.560. by Pattern-chaser

2.555. by Pattern-chaser

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*Instead of attacking my ignorance, etc., why not explain, with examples, and maybe links too, **how**, **when** and **by whom** dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have been "refuted", as you claim?*

Yeah let's explain mountains of stuff in one post.

It was refuted indirectly by all of science: for example there isn't a single evidence supporting genuine duality or genuine separation in the universe, everything is consistent with nonduality and non-separateness.

And in QM we also seem to have direct proof of nonduality because of the entire measurement problem, and direct proof of non-separateness because of entanglement.

Of course all this can be doubted and debated too, but until there is no evidence to the contrary, these can be seen as the new default metaphysical views.

And things like the self-other dichotomy or the subject-object dichotomy are contradicted in pretty much everything known today.

CHAPTER 2.563.

~

Gertie on 🕒 Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 9:09 PM

2.543. by Atla

2.542. by Gertie

I don't write off Atla's monist Idealism position either, if we're going for monism why not go with the substance we directly know exists, rather than go with the substance it presents as a representative model? It's a fair point.

I'm not really a monist, not an idealist and reject substance theory. The issues are subtle: Western monism, idealism and panpsychism are still subtle forms of dualistic thinking for various reasons. And substance theory is just ancient nonsense.

Think of it this way: if we go in the direction of 'monistic panpsychism', and then go through it, leave the scope of Western philosophy altogether, and still keep going, our views eventually collapse into the rather Eastern version of nondualism I subscribe to.

It's actually even more complicated than that, because first we arrive at the 'monistic' nondualism that most people subscribe to, but we have to still keep going forward and finally arrive at the lesser known 'non-monistic' nondualism (I haven't seen it categorized better yet). It's the only worldview I know of that's naturally compatible with all of science and also automatically solves things like the Hard problem etc.

I watched the talk you posted earlier, can't recall it well now, but the way I could get a handle on it was that everything is fundamentally akin to a field of experience, which presents in comprehensible ways as matter and everything else we perceive (reminded me of Plato's Cave). That might not be his position exactly, but that was how I could make sense of it at least.

I thought the bloke who gave the talk was very good at laying out the problems with how we can understand the issue, I agreed with him in that part. He clearly understands the problems.

Then he talked about QM which I don't understand, and then he came up with his solution. But it seemed speculative to me, another 'What If...'. And if the missing explanatory step between the problem and his solution is QM, I'd assume people who do understand QM would all come to his conclusion and be announcing QM had cracked the problem. So I think it's right for me to believe his conclusion is speculative.

That's my take.

(The meditation and 'feeling oneness with the world' through altered states of consciousness aren't persuasive to me, I consider that to be in principle explainable as feelings we get when we effectively shut down certain processes which contribute to our sense of self being in our awareness).

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 6 4 .

~

2.560. by Pattern-chaser

...why not explain, with examples, and maybe links too, **how**, **when** and **by whom** dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have been "refuted", as you claim?



2.562. by Atla

[Dualism] was refuted indirectly by all of science

This seems unlikely. After all, reductionism - pretty much the archetype of dualism - is a core tool of science. 🙄

CHAPTER 2.565.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 9:13 AM

Pattern-chaser wrote: QM isn't metaphysics, it's science. Or it was when I used Schrodinger's wave equation many years ago, to analyse the tunnelling of electrons through an insulating barrier. QM raises philosophical questions, yes. But it is still the best scientific theory we've ever created.

I think QM is deemed to be particularly relevant to philosophical questions about the interface between mind and matter, and dualism/non-dualism/monism etc because it brought into focus the fact (which had obviously always been there) that the observer of a physical system is itself part of the physical system.

As far as I can gather, these non-dualism ideas start from the observation that divisions in Nature, including the division between observer and observed, can be changed depending on purpose. i.e. we impose divisions on Nature to the extent that they are useful to our current purposes. For example, for some purposes we conclude that the Earth is a thing. For other purposes we conclude that it is a large collection of smaller things. Therefore it is concluded (by those who are that way inclined) that those divisions are, like any system of classification, abstract and not real. Therefore it is concluded (by those who are that way inclined) that, ontologically but not epistemologically, the universe is just one thing and that "thingness" (if, by that, we mean real sub-things within the universe) has no place in an ontology.

CHAPTER 2.566.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 12:04 PM



2.565. by Steve3007

Pattern-chaser wrote: QM isn't metaphysics, it's science. Or it was when I used Schrodinger's wave equation many years ago, to analyse the tunnelling of electrons through an insulating barrier. QM raises philosophical questions, yes. But it is still the best scientific theory we've ever created.

I think QM is deemed to be particularly relevant to philosophical questions about the interface between mind and matter, and dualism/non-dualism/monism etc because it brought into focus the fact (which had obviously always been there) that the observer of a physical system is itself part of the physical system.

Oh, that is what the fuss is about. 😊 The discovery that observation is active, not passive; no more 'impartial observers', at least in that sense. Thanks.

2.565. by Steve3007

As far as I can gather, these non-dualism ideas start from the observation that divisions in Nature, including the division between observer and observed, can be changed depending on purpose. i.e. we impose divisions on Nature to the extent that they are useful to our current purposes. For example, for some purposes we conclude that the Earth is a thing. For other purposes we conclude that it is a large collection of smaller things. Therefore it is concluded (by those who are that way inclined) that those divisions are, like any system of classification, abstract and not real. Therefore it is concluded (by those who are that way inclined) that, ontologically but not epistemologically, the universe is just one thing and that "thingness" (if, by that, we mean real sub-things within the universe) has no place in an ontology.

Dualism has pros and cons, as do the alternatives. In theory, I see no reason to divide anything without good strong reasons, and I am aware of none. But in practice, I also know that human minds cannot digest LU+E (Life, the Universe and Everything) in one bite, so we must either not think about anything at all complicated, or we must practice reductionism, which is multiply-recursive dualism. We divide and divide until the parts we have are small and simple enough for us to hold in our minds. I think we understand this division is unjustified, but the fact is that we have no choice.

In some ways, where we can, we renounce dualism. In other ways, where we cannot, we do not. There's a bit of cognitive dissonance there. 😊

My discussion with @Atla has not been about dualism directly, but about their claim that dualism has been "refuted" by science, or maybe by philosophy, I'm not sure. Of course it has not, but non-dualism currently holds the consensus, and I am quite happy with that. I have long accepted the tension between division (dualism) being unjustified, and reductionism (dualism) being necessary.

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 6 7 .

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 12:21 PM

2.566. by Pattern-chaser

I have long accepted the tension between division (dualism) being unjustified, and reductionism (dualism) being necessary.



Oops! Of course this dualism (reductionism) is only necessary for the certainty-worshipping cults within Western science and philosophy. As others have already observed here, dualism doesn't seem to be so problematic in Eastern philosophy. 😊

CHAPTER 2.568.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 1:12 PM

Pattern-chaser wrote: Oh, that is what the fuss is about. The discovery that observation is active, not passive; no more 'impartial observers', at least in that sense. Thanks.

Yes, I assume that's what the fuss is about. I assume that's why Atla mentioned a figure of "nearly a hundred years" in a post to you (I think) a while ago as the timescale for which he claims "dualism has been disproved" or some words similar to that. Nearly a hundred years takes us back to the dawn of QM so presumably that's what he had in mind.

CHAPTER 2.569.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 3:33 PM

2.563. by Gertie

I watched the talk you posted earlier, can't recall it well now, but the way I could get a handle on it was that everything is fundamentally akin to a field of experience, which presents in comprehensible ways as matter and everything else we perceive (reminded me of Plato's Cave). That might not be his position exactly, but that was how I could make sense of it at least.

I thought the bloke who gave the talk was very good at laying out the problems with how we can understand the issue, I agreed with him in that part. He clearly understands the problems.

Then he talked about QM which I don't understand, and then he came up with his solution. But it seemed speculative to me, another 'What If...'. And if the missing explanatory step between the problem and his solution is QM, I'd assume people who do understand QM would all come to his conclusion and be announcing QM had cracked the problem. So I think it's right for me to believe his conclusion is speculative.

That's my take.

No one fully understands QM as far as I know (personally I've been at it for 10 years, and the central issue still continues to be elusive, although I've come up with a unique hypothesis by now). It's not that QM is the missing link, it's that QM points to the nondual philosophical paradigm, which is

virtually unknown in the West. And in the nondual philosophical paradigm, the Hard problem is automatically resolved (there isn't one because there can't be), all we are left with are the Easy problems.

Anyway that video is somewhat outdated, Russell said that his views have evolved somewhat since then.

Btw the best source for this worldview are Alan Watts videos, I think he's by far the best at presenting it to a Western audience.

(The meditation and 'feeling oneness with the world' through altered states of consciousness aren't persuasive to me, I consider that to be in principle explainable as feelings we get when we effectively shut down certain processes which contribute to our sense of self being in our awareness).

Well, people who claim this stuff are somewhat delusional or maybe narcissistic+escapist. There is no 'oneness' to be 'felt', existence is simply nondual and things are fundamentally non-separable, but this doesn't come with some kind of universal sensation or feeling we can get access to. And one can arrive at such views without doing any meditation.

CHAPTER 2.570.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 3:37 PM

2.564. by Pattern-chaser

2.560. by Pattern-chaser

*...why not explain, with examples, and maybe links too, **how**, **when** and **by whom** dualistic approaches to science and philosophy have been "refuted", as you claim?*

2.562. by Atla

[Dualism] was refuted indirectly by all of science

This seems unlikely. After all, reductionism – pretty much the archetype of dualism – is a core tool of science.

Reductionism is a tool, not ontology.

CHAPTER 2.571.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 19, 2020 at 3:56 PM

2.566. by Pattern-chaser

2.565. by Steve3007

I think QM is deemed to be particularly relevant to philosophical questions about the interface between mind and matter, and dualism/non-dualism/monism etc because it brought into focus the fact (which had obviously always been there) that the observer of a physical system is itself part of the physical system.

Oh, that is what the fuss is about. The discovery that observation is active, not passive; no more 'impartial observers', at least in that sense. Thanks.

No, that's not what the fuss is about. I mean sure, there is some fuss about this one as well: observation always disturbs what is being observed. Originally, one of the core principles of the scientific process was the idea of total objectivity, and this idea was thoroughly refuted - by the scientific process. I'm not sure that we even need QM for this realization though. It's pretty simple and straightforward.

In short: *observations disturb what has to be measured*

The fuss is about the mindbending problem at the heart of QM, called the measurement problem. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think Steve understands this one.

In short (and take this as a metaphor, or with a bucket of salt): *observations not only disturb what has to be measured, they produce it*

CHAPTER 2.572.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 11:44 AM

*Atla wrote: The fuss is about the mindbending problem at the heart of QM, called the measurement problem. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think Steve understands this one.
In short (and take this as a metaphor, or with a bucket of salt): observations not only disturb what has to be measured, they produce it*

The "measurement problem", and its manifestation in the observations of particular experiments, has been discussed in various topics started by various posters here over the years. Here's one I started a few years ago as an example:

viewtopic.php?p=232485#p232485

Here's another example from even longer ago, by another poster, discussing the famous "delayed choice quantum eraser":

viewtopic.php?p=69588#p69588

CHAPTER 2.573.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 11:50 AM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🗨️ Evidence [here](#).

2.557. by GE Morton

There is no metaphysics involved in denying that mental states and brain states are identical, BTW. It is a straightforward, strictly empirical observation (assuming the common definitions of "identity," of course).

Now, it is all completely bogus metaphysics and actually involves rejecting "strictly empirical observation". Because what can be observed empirically are just brain states and motor responses created by those brain states. That's all there is, period.

CHAPTER 2.574.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 2:08 PM

2.572. by Steve3007

Atla wrote: The fuss is about the mindbending problem at the heart of QM, called the measurement problem. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think Steve understands this one.

In short (and take this as a metaphor, or with a bucket of salt): observations not only disturb what has to be measured, they produce it

The "measurement problem", and its manifestation in the observations of particular experiments, has been discussed in various topics started by various posters here over the years. Here's one I started a few years ago as an example:

<viewtopic.php?p=232485#p232485>

Here's another example from even longer ago, by another poster, discussing the famous "delayed choice quantum eraser":

<viewtopic.php?p=69588#p69588>

Yeah, but it never really seems to hit you what this kind of observer-dependence seems to be telling us. This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world. Like they were one and the same kind of thing.

CHAPTER 2.575.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 5:52 PM



Atla wrote:[Dualism] was refuted indirectly by all of science

2.564. by Pattern-chaser

This seems unlikely. After all, reductionism – pretty much the archetype of dualism – is a core tool of science. 🤔

2.570. by Atla

Reductionism is a tool, not ontology.

So embracing dualism, out of practical and pragmatic necessity, is OK, provided that ontological purity is maintained? 🤔

CHAPTER 2.576.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:05 PM

2.575. by Pattern-chaser

Atla wrote:[Dualism] was refuted indirectly by all of science

2.564. by Pattern-chaser

This seems unlikely. After all, reductionism – pretty much the archetype of dualism – is a core tool of science. 🤔

2.570. by Atla

Reductionism is a tool, not ontology.

So embracing dualism, out of practical and pragmatic necessity, is OK, provided that ontological purity is maintained? 🤔

Sure..

CHAPTER 2.577.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 7:07 PM

2.574. by Atla

Yeah, but it never really seems to hit you what this kind of observer-dependence seems to be telling us. This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world. Like they were one and the same kind of thing.

There is a correlation between the "outside world" --- the one we conceive and talk about --- and mental content, but it is far from perfect. The mental content is directly experienced; that "outside world" is a theoretical construct built upon that mental content --- a dynamic construct that evolves and mutates over time.

There is, to be sure, another sense of "outside world" --- an hypothesized world completely independent of us which is the cause of our mental content. That outside world is unknowable by us, and hence about which we can say nothing.

CHAPTER 2.578.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 7:09 PM

2.573. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Now, it is all completely bogus metaphysics and actually involves rejecting "strictly empirical observation". Because what can be observed empirically are just brain states and motor responses created by those brain states. That's all there is, period.

Huh. Are you now denying that mental phenomena exist? Or are you restricting "empirical" to third-party phenomena only?

CHAPTER 2.579.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 5:49 AM

2.577. by GE Morton

2.574. by Atla

Yeah, but it never really seems to hit you what this kind of observer-dependence seems to be telling us. This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world. Like they were one and the same kind of thing.

There is a correlation between the "outside world" --- the one we conceive and talk about --- and mental content, but it is far from perfect. The mental content is directly experienced; that "outside world" is a theoretical construct built upon that mental content --- a dynamic construct that evolves and mutates over time.

There is, to be sure, another sense of "outside world" --- an hypothesized world completely independent of us which is the cause of our mental content. That outside world is unknowable by us, and hence about which we can say nothing.

I find it difficult to address your comment. Not only does it seem to have nothing to do with the kind of perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, that's inherent to the measurement problem. But even other than, it still seems to makes no sense.

For example, if you really can't tell anything about the noumenon, then how can you tell that the noumenon is independent of us, and is the cause of our mental content? Especially that these are unnecessary assumptions.

And even though we technically can never say anything about the noumenon, does that mean that we shouldn't? So that's it, forget science, forget philosophy, I'm stuck with my own mind, and let's end any inquiry there?

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 8 0 .

~

Atla on  Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:39 AM

Kant doesn't seem to have realized that the dichotomy of noumena and phenomena is probably just a pragmatic one, not an ontological one. And most philosophers after him seem to have adopted this subtle dualistic mistake.

C H A P T E R 2 . 5 8 1 .

~

Gertie on  Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 7:58 AM

2.577. by GE Morton

2.574. by Atla

Yeah, but it never really seems to hit you what this kind of observer-dependence seems to be telling us. This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world. Like they were one and the same kind of thing.

There is a correlation between the "outside world" --- the one we conceive and talk about --- and mental content, but it is far from perfect. The mental content is directly experienced; that "outside world" is a theoretical construct built upon that mental content --- a dynamic construct that evolves and mutates over time.

There is, to be sure, another sense of "outside world" --- an hypothesized world completely independent of us which is the cause of our mental content. That outside world is unknowable by us, and hence about which we can say nothing.

Those are both the same 'outside world'

You can only escape solipsism and talk about 'us' if you assume that hypothesised 'outside world' exists and we both have a relationship with it. Because I am part of your 'outside world' and vice versa. So as soon as you invoke 'our' mental experience or observations you have already invoked a world you and I (and everybody else) share.

Then we can compare notes about the contents of our own experience and construct a shared model of our shared world.

CHAPTER 2.582.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 2:05 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.578. by GE Morton

Huh. Are you now denying that mental phenomena exist? Or are you restricting "empirical" to third-party phenomena only?

Yes, I'm restricting empirical to what can be verified intersubjectively to exist (that may be too stringent, but I'm doing it anyway!), and no, I'm not denying that mental phenomenon exist. I'm just saying we need to accept as a scientific fact that they are nothing above and beyond brain states and figure out a way to reconcile ourselves to that fact instead of inventing goofy non-scientific metaphysical claims that only philosophers take seriously.



GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 3:35 PM

2.582. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Yes, I'm restricting empirical to what can be verified intersubjectively to exist (that may be too stringent, but I'm doing it anyway!), and no, I'm not denying that mental phenomenon exist.

That is a strange, if not paradoxical, construal of "empirical," given that everything verifiable intersubjectively is first apprehended subjectively, and cannot be intersubjectively verified. Empiricism begins from, rests upon, subjective mental phenomena. You're affirming the forest while denying the trees.

I'm just saying we need to accept as a scientific fact that they are nothing above and beyond brain states and figure out a way to reconcile ourselves to that fact instead of inventing goofy non-scientific metaphysical claims that only philosophers take seriously.

"Above and beyond" is a bit ambiguous. My claim is only that mental phenomena are *distinct from*, distinguishable from, intersubjectively observable phenomena. There is an intimate relationship between them, but they are not identical. And there is nothing metaphysical about that claim --- it is a primitive observation, and obvious.



GE Morton on 🕒 Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 4:18 PM

2.581. by Gertie

Those are both the same 'outside world'

You can only escape solipsism and talk about "us" if you assume that hypothesised 'outside world' exists and we both have a relationship with it.

Oh, I agree with the latter statement. But those two "outside worlds" are not the same. The "outside world" we think of as "the real world," that we talk about in everyday conversation and that is described by science, is a constructed world, a conceptual model, a theoretical structure we've invented. The other "outside world," Kant's *noumenon*, is an hypothetical realm postulated as the primordial cause of the phenomena we subjectively experience.

The "real world" of science and common understanding is a model. The noumenon is what that model strives to be a model of. But we can never know how accurate that model is, because to compare two things you have to be able to observe both. And we can't observe the noumenon; all we can know about is what subjective phenomena it --- by hypothesis --- arouses in us.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 10:49 PM

GE Morton wrote: The "real world" of science and common understanding is a model. The noumenon is what that model strives to be a model of. But we can never know how accurate that model is, because to compare two things you have to be able to observe both.

But one thing we tend to do, in order to assess whether the model is an accurate model of this noumenon, is decide that there are certain characteristics that the noumenon must have in order to "make sense" - to be coherent. We then look at the model to see if it has those characteristics. If it doesn't have characteristics which we deem it to need in order to be coherent, some of us then say "OK, forget the noumenon. Just use the model to make predictions of future observations, and don't worry about what it's a model of".

~

Gertie on 🕒 Friday, October 23, 2020 at 12:03 AM

2.584. by GE Morton

2.581. by Gertie

Those are both the same 'outside world'

You can only escape solipsism and talk about "us" if you assume that hypothesised 'outside world' exists and we both have a relationship with it.

Oh, I agree with the latter statement. But those two "outside worlds" are not the same. The "outside world" we think of as "the real world," that we talk about in everyday conversation and that is described by science, is a constructed world, a conceptual model, a theoretical structure we've invented. The other "outside world," Kant's noumenon, is an hypothetical realm postulated as the primordial cause of the phenomena we subjectively experience.

The "real world" of science and common understanding is a model. The noumenon is what that model strives to be a model of. But we can never know how accurate that model is, because to compare two things you have to be able to observe both. And we can't observe the noumenon; all we can know about is what subjective phenomena it --- by hypothesis --- arouses in us.

The point I'm making is, if we assume that hypothetical world is real, then that's what is being modelled. And as soon as you talk about 'we' or 'our experience' you have assumed that hypothetical world exists, is real, and you know something about it (that other people exist and have experience). By comparing notes about the contents of our experience with other people we just add detail to the model of an 'outside world' we share and can inter-subjectively agree on some things we experience in relationship to it.

So the model isn't a different world, it's how we experience the real world. And as soon as you make 'we' claims, including claims about 'our experience', you have assumed a real 'outside-my-experience' world exists.

Hence the need for clarity and consistency on what assumptions underly any claim, and what those assumptions entail. And the need to avoid slipping between underlying assumptions.

Our inter-subjective shared model has its own methods of establishing 'objective' facts, the empirical/scientific method. It is here, within the current model, that the Hard Problem arises, and suggests our model of the real world as we experience it needs re-thinking.

CHAPTER 2.587.

~

Atla on  Friday, October 23, 2020 at 3:51 AM

2.586. by Gertie

The point I'm making is, if we assume that hypothetical world is real, then that's what is being modelled. And as soon as you talk about 'we' or 'our experience' you have assumed that hypothetical world exists, is real, and you know something about it (that other people exist and have experience). By comparing notes about the contents of our experience with other people we just add detail to the model of an 'outside world' we share and can inter-subjectively agree on some things we experience in relationship to it.

So the model isn't a different world, it's how we experience the real world. And as soon as you make 'we' claims, including claims about 'our experience', you have assumed a real 'outside-my-experience' world exists.


Hence the need for clarity and consistency on what assumptions underly any claim, and what those assumptions entail. And the need to avoid slipping between underlying assumptions.

Our inter-subjective shared model has its own methods of establishing 'objective' facts, the empirical/scientific method. It is here, within the current model, that the Hard Problem arises, and suggests our model of the real world as we experience it needs re-thinking.

As usual I blame Kant, looks like he really thought that it was nonsensical to imbue the noumenon with any reality. So we should get stuck in this weird kind of limbo, where we aren't full-blown solipsists yet, but we also don't relate to the noumenon like it was an actual outside world that's there. Imo a philosophically unjustified, psychologically unnatural/unhealthy state to be in.

CHAPTER 2.588.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 5:05 PM

2.579. by Atla

2.577. by GE Morton

There is a correlation between the "outside world" --- the one we conceive and talk about --- and mental content, but it is far from perfect. The mental content is directly experienced; that "outside world" is a theoretical construct built upon that mental content --- a dynamic construct that evolves and mutates over time.

There is, to be sure, another sense of "outside world" --- an hypothesized world completely independent of us which is the cause of our mental content. That outside world is unknowable by us, and hence about which we can say nothing.

I find it difficult to address your comment. Not only does it seem to have nothing to do with the kind of perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, that's inherent to the measurement problem. But even other than, it still seems to makes no sense.

You're right; it has nothing to do with the measurement problem. The statement of yours to which the comment was directed was broader than that: "This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world."

That correlation is far from perfect.

For example, if you really can't tell anything about the noumenon, then how can you tell that the noumenon is independent of us, and is the cause of our mental content? Especially that these are unnecessary assumptions.


It is *postulated* to be independent of us and the cause of mental phenomena. And, yes, it is necessary, if we wish to explain those phenomena (which consists in find their cause), given that no cause is evident within those phenomena.

And even though we technically can never say anything about the noumenon, does that mean that we shouldn't? So that's it, forget science, forget philosophy, I'm stuck with my own mind, and let's end any inquiry there?

Any proposition we might utter concerning the noumenon, other than those included in the hypothesis itself, would be non-cognitive. That hypothesis allows us to escape solipsism.

CHAPTER 2.589.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 5:08 PM


2.580. by Atla

Kant doesn't seem to have realized that the dichotomy of noumena and phenomena is probably just a pragmatic one, not an ontological one. And most philosophers after him seem to have adopted this subtle dualistic mistake.

No, it is not "pragmatic." Since no cause of mental phenomena is apparent within that phenomena --- it doesn't explain itself --- an external cause must be postulated. There is no mistake.

CHAPTER 2.590.

~

GE Morton on  Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 5:27 PM

2.585. by Steve3007

GE Morton wrote: The "real world" of science and common understanding is a model. The noumenon is what that model strives to be a model of. But we can never know how accurate that model is, because to compare two things you have to be able to observe both.

But one thing we tend to do, in order to assess whether the model is an accurate model of this noumenon, is decide that there are certain characteristics that the noumenon must have in order to "make sense" - to be coherent. We then look at the model to see if it has those characteristics. If it doesn't have characteristics which we deem it to need in order to be coherent, some of us then say "OK, forget the noumenon. Just use the model to make predictions of future observations, and don't worry about what it's a model of".

Hmmm. Not sure to what the first "it" in the 2nd to last sentence refers --- the noumenon, or the model? Nor am I sure the term "coherent" can be applied to the noumenon, or the universe. That is a demand we make of descriptions and theories (verbal constructs). We do assume that the noumenon (and the universe) are law-governed, since the alternative is randomness. And since random behaviors are inexplicable we rule that out (even though there may well be some randomness in the universe).

And I agree, essentially, with "... forget the noumenon. Just use the model to make predictions of future observations, and don't worry about what it's a model of". We need to posit its existence, but there is no need to say anything more about it.

CHAPTER 2.591.

~

Atla on  Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 5:51 PM

2.588. by GE Morton

You're right; it has nothing to do with the measurement problem. The statement of yours to which the comment was directed was broader than that: "This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world."

That correlation is far from perfect.

Wrong, it was a statement about the measurement problem.

It is postulated to be independent of us and the cause of mental phenomena. And, yes, it is necessary, if we wish to explain those phenomena (which consists in find their cause), given that no cause is evident within those phenomena.

No, it is not "pragmatic." Since no cause of mental phenomena is apparent within that phenomena -- - it doesn't explain itself --- an external cause must be postulated. There is no mistake.

That's mistaking the phenomena with what the phenomena are 'showing'. The phenomena themselves need no cause, and postulating their independence or fundamental difference from the noumena is also a mistake.

Any proposition we might utter concerning the noumenon, other than those included in the hypothesis itself, would be non-cognitive. That hypothesis allows us to escape solipsism.

What's a non-cognitive proposition?

CHAPTER 2.592.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 6:00 PM

2.586. by Gertie

The point I'm making is, if we assume that hypothetical world is real, then that's what is being modelled.

Yes.

And as soon as you talk about 'we' or 'our experience' you have assumed that hypothetical world exists, is real, and you know something about it (that other people exist and have experience). By comparing notes about the contents of our experience with other people we just add detail to the model of an 'outside world' we share and can inter-subjectively agree on some things we experience in relationship to it.

Yes, we assume the model accurately represents that outside world, the noumenon. But we have no means of testing that assumption. Nonetheless, we rely on the model until it fails to correctly predict some phenomenon. In some cases we can tweak the model to remove that failure; in other cases we're forced to revise it substantially or rebuild it from scratch. But there are, in principle, many ways --- perhaps infinitely many --- to describe, or model, any given phenomena, all with equal explanatory power.

So the model isn't a different world, it's how we experience the real world.

The model is the "real world" as we currently conceive it. It is not what we directly experience, however.

And as soon as you make 'we' claims, including claims about 'our experience', you have assumed a real 'outside-my-experience' world exists.

Actually, we make that assumption even before we make claims about our experience. The question of the cause of his existence and perceptions would arise even for a creature alone in the universe, if he/she/it were sentient.

Our inter-subjective shared model has its own methods of establishing 'objective' facts, the empirical/scientific method. It is here, within the current model, that the Hard Problem arises, and suggests our model of the real world as we experience it needs re-thinking.

Yes, it does. But the revision necessary is fairly minor.

CHAPTER 2.593.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 11:02 PM

2.591. by Atla

2.588. by GE Morton

You're right; it has nothing to do with the measurement problem. The statement of yours to which the comment was directed was broader than that: "This perfect correlation or connection or whatever we want to call it, between mental content and the outside physical world."

That correlation is far from perfect.

Wrong, it was a statement about the measurement problem.

Your statement quoted above says nothing about the measurement problem, which, BTW, is not a problem involving the correlation between mental content and the outside world.

It is postulated to be independent of us and the cause of mental phenomena. And, yes, it is necessary, if we wish to explain those phenomena (which consists in find their cause), given that no cause is evident within those phenomena.

No, it is not "pragmatic." Since no cause of mental phenomena is apparent within that phenomena --- it doesn't explain itself --- an external cause must be postulated. There is no mistake.

That's mistaking the phenomena with what the phenomena are 'showing'. The phenomena themselves need no cause, and postulating their independence or fundamental difference from the noumena is also a mistake.

That the phenomena are "showing" something is an hypothesis. The noumenon is postulated as the cause of those phenomena. And, yes, causes are necessarily different from and independent of their effects. A casual relationship is not an identity relationship.

Any proposition we might utter concerning the noumenon, other than those included in the hypothesis itself, would be non-cognitive. That hypothesis allows us to escape solipsism.

What's a non-cognitive proposition?

A proposition is non-cognitive if it has no articulable and actionable truth conditions, no determinable truth value. I.e., when we don't know what observations to make or procedures to follow to determine whether it is true or false.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, October 26, 2020 at 3:09 PM

2.593. by GE Morton

Your statement quoted above says nothing about the measurement problem,

When I write "measurement problem", I'm talking about the "measurement problem".

which, BTW, is not a problem involving the correlation between mental content and the outside world.

Wrong, of course it involves that too. Unless you can show that for some reason it doesn't.

But you probably don't know what kind of perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, is in question here. Which was my point, ~90% people on philosophy forums aren't up-to-date with metaphysics.

That the phenomena are "showing" something is an hypothesis. The noumenon is postulated as the cause of those phenomena. And, yes, causes are necessarily different from and independent of their effects. A casual relationship is not an identity relationship.

You are still confusing the (nature of the) phenomena themselves with what the phenomena are showing. Yes, what the phenomena are showing (how the phenomena are shaped / what they present), may be an end result of a 'causal chain', if we want to force a one-directional causality on the world.

But that in no way means that the phenomena themselves are "caused" by noumena, and that there is a fundamental one-directional causality between them, or that they are independent. Postulating such things is nonsense.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 11:02 AM

GE Morton wrote:Hmmm. Not sure to what the first "it" in the 2nd to last sentence refers --- the noumenon, or the model?

That's the sentence: "We then look at the model to see if it has those characteristics."

In that sentence the "it" refers to the model.

Nor am I sure the term "coherent" can be applied to the noumenon, or the universe.

Nor am I. But I note that some people do apply what they seem to see as a test of coherence or "making sense" to the thing which we call reality and which we think of our models as attempting to describe. That appears to be one reason for some people's philosophical issues with some of the

findings of quantum mechanics, if we think of those findings as being attempts to describe a thing we call reality and not just attempts to describe the regularities we notice in our sensations.

That is a demand we make of descriptions and theories (verbal constructs).

Yes. We ask that verbal and mathematical constructs that are used to describe things are internally logically consistent. But, as I said, I note that a lot of people, often in vaguely defined ways, extend concepts like consistency and coherence to the things being described as well as to the descriptions. I think it often stems from a confusion between that which is logically inconsistent and that which is empirically not observed to be the case. For example, it is empirically observed that objects don't spontaneously appear/disappear. (That might sometime superficially be observed to happen, but it always turns out that the object in question has gone behind something, or been transformed into another type of object, or whatever.) Some people seem to take this empirically verified rule as a logically necessary rule and conflate those two completely different types of rule or principle.

CHAPTER 2.596.

~

Atla on  Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 5:11 PM

2.595. by Steve3007

Nor am I sure the term "coherent" can be applied to the noumenon, or the universe. Nor am I. But I note that some people do apply what they seem to see as a test of coherence or "making sense" to the thing which we call reality and which we think of our models as attempting to describe. That appears to be one reason for some people's philosophical issues with some of the findings of quantum mechanics, if we think of those findings as being attempts to describe a thing we call reality and not just attempts to describe the regularities we notice in our sensations.


It's entirely possible that the world is random and makes no sense at all. That the big questions have no answers.

So either we don't even try to deal with big questions. Or we do try, and assume that there is some consistency, logic to the world, because otherwise it's not possible to get anywhere. Personally I don't understand the 'let's not try' attitude at all, at least not in a philosophical setting.

Besides quantum mechanics is a bad example. It is mind-bendingly strange, but it is mind-bendingly strange in a perfectly consistent manner. It's cliché, but no prediction of QM was ever wrong. What would it describe if not a behaviour of reality?

CHAPTER 2.597.

~

Steve3007 on  Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 6:36 PM

Atla wrote:It's entirely possible that the world is random and makes no sense at all.

Would you regard "being random" and "making no sense" as the same?

CHAPTER 2.598.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 6:45 PM

Atla wrote:What would it describe if not a behaviour of reality?

One of the standard answers, as we know, is that it describes and predicts the results of experiments - observations. The question of whether those results tell us something about the "behaviour of reality" is the question that some people prefer to leave open, or prefer to regard as entirely metaphysical (those being the kinds of people who regard something that is "entirely metaphysical" as angels on the head of a pin meaningless.)

CHAPTER 2.599.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 7:30 PM

2.597. by Steve3007

Would you regard "being random" and "making no sense" as the same?

I guess I don't, not necessarily. But I'm not sure, after all it makes no sense anymore.

One of the standard answers, as we know, is that it describes and predicts the results of experiments - observations. The question of whether those results tell us something about the "behaviour of reality" is the question that some people prefer to leave open, or prefer to regard as entirely metaphysical (those being the kinds of people who regard something that is "entirely metaphysical" as angels on the head of a pin meaningless.)

I don't understand this attitude at all, in a philosophical setting. Instrumentalism is not a philosophy, it's the lack of philosophy.

CHAPTER 2.600.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 4:39 PM

2.594. by Atla

2.593. by GE Morton

... which, BTW, is not a problem involving the correlation between mental content and the outside world.

Wrong, of course it involves that too. Unless you can show that for some reason it doesn't.

Er, no. The burden of proof rests with he who holds the affirmative.

But you probably don't know what kind of perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, is in question here. Which was my point, ~90% people on philosophy forums aren't up-to-date with metaphysics.

"Up to date with metaphysics"? Which/whose metaphysics do you deem "up to date"?

That the phenomena are "showing" something is an hypothesis. The noumenon is postulated as the cause of those phenomena. And, yes, causes are necessarily different from and independent of their effects. A casual relationship is not an identity relationship.

You are still confusing the (nature of the) phenomena themselves with what the phenomena are showing.

You seem not have grasped the point you just quoted. So let me repeat it: that the phenomena are "showing" something (something beyond themselves) is an hypothesis, a *theory* of the phenomena. Which theory is another mental artifact.

Yes, what the phenomena are showing (how the phenomena are shaped / what they present), may be an end result of a 'causal chain', if we want to force a one-directional causality on the world.

But that in no way means that the phenomena themselves are "caused" by noumena, and that there is a fundamental one-directional causality between them, or that they are independent. Postulating such things is nonsense.

You just contradicted yourself. If mental phenomena are effects of a causal chain, then then some cause(s) is necessary. The noumenon is *postulated* to be that cause. If it is "nonsense," then so is is the causal chain. And if that is also nonsense, then phenomena are inexplicable.

CHAPTER 2.601.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 4:42 PM

2.596. by Atla

Besides quantum mechanics is a bad example. It is mind-bendingly strange, but it is mind-bendingly strange in a perfectly consistent manner. It's cliché, but no prediction of QM was ever wrong. What would it describe if not a behaviour of reality?

It describes the observations --- the phenomena we experience.

CHAPTER 2.602.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 5:47 PM

2.600. by GE Morton

Er, no. The burden of proof rests with he who holds the affirmative.

"Up to date with metaphysics"? Which/whose metaphysics do you deem "up to date"?

If you were more up-to-date, you would know that you are asking for proof for something that was observed to be the case for every experiment ever carried out. Hence the measurement problem.

You seem not have grasped the point you just quoted. So let me repeat it: that the phenomena are "showing" something (something beyond themselves) is an hypothesis, a theory of the phenomena. Which theory is another mental artifact.

Obviously, and? That wasn't the issue.

You just contradicted yourself. If mental phenomena are effects of a causal chain, then then some cause(s) is necessary. The noumenon is postulated to be that cause. If it is "nonsense," then so is is the causal chain. And if that is also nonsense, then phenomena are inexplicable.

You still don't seem to understand the difference between the mental phenomena and what the mental phenomena are showing. I addressed this above. I don't know what else to tell you if you fail to make this simple distinction.

It describes the observations --- the phenomena we experience.

Which is also true for everything else ever in science, was that supposed to be an argument for something?

CHAPTER 2.603.

~

GE Morton on 🕒 Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 10:45 PM

2.602. by Atla

2.600. by GE Morton

Er, no. The burden of proof rests with he who holds the affirmative.

"Up to date with metaphysics"? Which/whose metaphysics do you deem "up to date"?

If you were more up-to-date, you would know that you are asking for proof for something that was observed to be the case for every experiment ever carried out. Hence the measurement problem.

You seem to be confusing experimental physics with metaphysics. You made a claim about metaphysics, then attempt to defend it with a statement about physics.

You seem not have grasped the point you just quoted. So let me repeat it: that the phenomena are "showing" something (something beyond themselves) is an hypothesis, a theory of the phenomena. Which theory is another mental artifact. Obviously, and? That wasn't the issue.

Then,

You still don't seem to understand the difference between the mental phenomena and what the mental phenomena are showing.

You acknowledge the point, then proceed to ignore it.

???

CHAPTER 2.604.

~

Atla on  Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 3:42 AM

2.603. by GE Morton

You seem to be confusing experimental physics with metaphysics. You made a claim about metaphysics, then attempt to defend it with a statement about physics.

Yes, seem, to some. No one really knows where to draw the line between physics and metaphysics when it comes to the measurement problem, or whether we can even fully do that (probably not), that's all part of the problem. The issues seem to be inherent to all experiments though, that's consistent. Though some will deny/ignore/overlook some of the issues, but they also do this consistently for all experiments.

Obviously, and? That wasn't the issue.

Then,

You still don't seem to understand the difference between the mental phenomena and what the mental phenomena are showing.

You acknowledge the point, then proceed to ignore it.

???

Because that's not relevant. Unless you want to argue that we should adopt a stupid Kantian limbo, where we aren't full-blown solipsists yet, but we also don't imbue the noumenon with any reality. A sort of quasi-solipsism.

CHAPTER 2.605.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 7:40 AM

Anyway, I don't usually recommend books, but this is in my opinion the best introduction to the measurement problem:

"Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness" by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner (written by physicists)

It really gets across the issue of this perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, between mental content such as human choices, and states of the outside physical world, where the states can be irreconcilable with each other. Plus more stuff that's incompatible with dualistic philosophy, like non-separability and so on.

That's why most founders of QM turned to Eastern philosophy for answers. Anyway, these things I mention still only concern the easier parts of the measurement problem, they are probably resolvable via philosophy, just not really Western philosophy. Better to get through these philosophical issues before taking on the central problem(s).

CHAPTER 2.606.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 10:56 AM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.605. by Atla

Anyway, I don't usually recommend books, but this is in my opinion the best introduction to the measurement problem:

"Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness" by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner (written by physicists)

In my experience, literally every time a physicist thinks they are qualified to discuss consciousness, and especially when they try to bring quantum physics into the mix, the result is pure garbage. No thanks.

CHAPTER 2.607.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 11:20 AM



2.606. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

In my experience, literally every time a physicist thinks they are qualified to discuss consciousness, and especially when they try to bring quantum physics into the mix, the result is pure garbage.

Sir Roger Penrose, if no-one else, feels that QM offers a mechanism that might help to explain and understand thought, in general, and consciousness, in particular. Not that his opinion makes it true, of course, but it does seem to have merit... 🤔

CHAPTER 2.608.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 11:38 AM

2.606. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.605. by Atla

Anyway, I don't usually recommend books, but this is in my opinion the best introduction to the measurement problem:

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In my experience, literally every time a physicist thinks they are qualified to discuss consciousness, and especially when they try to bring quantum physics into the mix, the result is pure garbage. No thanks.

The book doesn't discuss consciousness, it tries to describe what the quantum problem is. Anyway I agree you should skip it 😊

CHAPTER 2.609.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 12:21 PM

2.605. by Atla

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Ah, so that's where your position on these matters originates. Your posts start to make more sense now. They're based on a book you read, and were impressed by. There's nothing wrong with that. This is where your supposed "refutation" of dualistic philosophy comes from, yes? And the reason



you can't or won't expand upon your position is that it originates in this book, and you don't understand it well enough to explain it to someone else, although you yourself are convinced by what you have read? I'm speculating, of course. But this explanation is so good that I'm inclined to stick with it. 😊

CHAPTER 2.610.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 12:55 PM

2.609. by Pattern-chaser

2.605. by Atla

Anyway, I don't usually recommend books, but this is in my opinion the best introduction to the measurement problem:

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It really gets across the issue of this perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, between mental content such as human choices, and states of the outside physical world, where the states can be irreconcilable with each other. Plus more stuff that's incompatible with dualistic philosophy, like non-separability and so on.

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In this form, no to all of them, besides the book simply states facts and doesn't attempt to come up with an answer. Like most others here, you don't seem to be cut out to keep up with modern science and metaphysics, so just skip it.

CHAPTER 2.611.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 1:08 PM

Seriously, I can't be expected to give a simple few-sentences demonstration of an issue that not even Nobel-prize winners in physics couldn't figure out for a century. Not just the answer, but what exactly the issue even is. You people are unbelievable.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 2:08 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.607. by *Pattern-chaser*

Sir Roger Penrose, if no-one else, feels that QM offers a mechanism that might help to explain and understand thought, in general, and consciousness, in particular. Not that his opinion makes it true, of course, but it does seem to have merit... 🤔

He is actually one of the folks who I firmly believe has written nothing but useless garbage on the subject of consciousness. Literally the only reason he's taken seriously on this subject, about which he knows nothing and has had no training in, is because he's one of the greatest living physicists on the planet. And for some idiotic reason, people--especially physicists--seem to think that if you are a great physicist, somehow your opinions on other scientific matters outside of your expertise should carry more weight than they actually deserve.

The very basis of his entire argument is predicated on an absurd application of Godel's Theorem to a straw man version of AI which is supposed to prove that consciousness cannot be achieved by any algorithmic process. To make a long story short, GT only applies to a very specific set of algorithmic/computational processes satisfying a very strict series of conditions. If the algorithmic process one is talking about fails to fall into that category--as all AI projects do--then literally nothing that Godel revealed applies and the theorem becomes utterly and completely irrelevant. Godel's Theorem absolutely and unequivocally does not apply to the computational processes involved in artificial intelligence in the way his argument demands.

This is one of the rare times when an argument's failure is a matter of fact and not opinion, and this bogus argument is quite literally the only basis Penrose has for thinking there are special quantum mechanical processes at the heart of consciousness.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 2:16 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).

2.608. by *Atla*

The book doesn't discuss consciousness, it tries to describe what the quantum problem is. Anyway I agree you should skip it

Then why put "consciousness" in the title? Just to attract unwary buyers who think they picking up yet another absurd New Age screed on the subject?

By the way, I'm never going to deny that quantum physics has introduced some extremely major and serious challenges to our understanding of reality which too many people do not appreciate. And while I'm generally reticent to allow metaphysics into any discussion (because 90% of the time, when you resort to metaphysics you've just basically given up), this is one topic where I just don't think you can avoid it. But I tend to see these challenges as relating to traditional Realism in science and reject the idea that quantum physics says anything about or involves consciousness in any interesting way.

Nevertheless, this area of physics really exposes some deep problems in how we model and understand everything around us and is absolutely worth studying.

CHAPTER 2.614.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 1, 2020 at 2:34 PM

2.613. by *Faustus5 (Dennett)*

2.608. by *Atla*

The book doesn't discuss consciousness, it tries to describe what the quantum problem is. Anyway I agree you should skip it

Then why put "consciousness" in the title? Just to attract unwary buyers who think they picking up yet another absurd New Age screed on the subject?

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Nevertheless, this area of physics really exposes some deep problems in how we model and understand everything around us and is absolutely worth studying.

"Consciousness" is in the title, because physics seems to have encountered consciousness, whatever that means. Hence the measurement problem. The book isn't about a quantum mechanical explanation of consciousness, but about this encounter. As I said most people should just skip this, and stick to the outdated science.

For example Wigner put it bluntly: "it was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum mechanics in a fully consistent way without reference to the consciousness".

CHAPTER 2.615.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 12:50 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.614. by Atla

For example Wigner put it bluntly: "it was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum mechanics in a fully consistent way without reference to the consciousness".

Wigner was absolutely wrong and just about no one in the mainstream of science who actually knows what they are talking about takes these types of claims seriously anymore. It is complete and utter hogwash.

CHAPTER 2.616.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 2:49 PM



2.609. by Pattern-chaser

Ah, so that's where your position on these matters originates. Your posts start to make more sense now. They're based on a book you read, and were impressed by. There's nothing wrong with that. This is where your supposed "refutation" of dualistic philosophy comes from, yes? And the reason you can't or won't expand upon your position is that it originates in this book, and you don't understand it well enough to explain it to someone else, although you yourself are convinced by what you have read? I'm speculating, of course. But this explanation is so good that I'm inclined to stick with it. 😊

2.610. by Atla

In this form, no to all of them, besides the book simply states facts and doesn't attempt to come up with an answer. Like most others here, you don't seem to be cut out to keep up with modern science and metaphysics, so just skip it.

And yet I'm the one who has learned, and used, Schrodinger's wave equation, and you have, what, read a book? 🤔 I'll stick with my working theory for now; it fits the evidence presented so far... 🙄

CHAPTER 2.617.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 3:42 PM

2.616. by Pattern-chaser

2.609. by Pattern-chaser

Ah, so that's where your position on these matters originates. Your posts start to make more sense now. They're based on a book you read, and were impressed by. There's nothing wrong with that. This is where your supposed "refutation" of dualistic philosophy comes from, yes? And the reason you can't or won't expand upon your position is that it originates in this book, and you don't understand it well enough to explain it to someone else, although you yourself are convinced by what you have read? I'm speculating, of course. But this explanation is so good that I'm inclined to stick with it. 😊

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And yet I'm the one who has learned, and used, Schrodinger's wave equation, and you have, what, read a book? 😞 I'll stick with my working theory for now; it fits the evidence presented so far... 🤔

Good luck with that. Your working theory doesn't fit the evidence, and guess why Schrödinger turned to the Vedas.

CHAPTER 2.618.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 3:48 PM

2.615. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.614. by Atla

For example Wigner put it bluntly: "it was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum mechanics in a fully consistent way without reference to the consciousness".

Wigner was absolutely wrong and just about no one in the mainstream of science who actually knows what they are talking about takes these types of claims seriously anymore. It is complete and utter hogwash.

Ffs no he wasn't. The Neumann-Wigner interpretation is probably wrong, but that a reference to something about consciousness can't be avoided, has always been correct. And today many mainstream scientists acknowledge that the measurement problem remains unsolved, in fact their numbers are growing.

Do you ever get something right?

Here are some more quotes

"Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there is only one thing and that what seems to be a plurality is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (the Indian MAJA)" [...] "Multiplicity is only apparent, there is only one mind" [...] "our science – Greek science – is based on objectivation, whereby it has cut itself off from an adequate understanding of the Subject of Cognitance, of the mind. But I do believe that this is precisely the point where our present way of thinking does need to be amended [...]" Erwin Schrödinger

"I consider those developments in physics during the last decades which have shown how problematical such concepts as "objective" and "subjective" are, a great liberation of thought. "
Niels Bohr

"[...] the existence of quantum theory has changed our attitude from what was believed in the nineteenth century. During that period some scientists were inclined to think that the psychological phenomena could ultimately be explained on the basis of physics and chemistry of the brain. From the quantum-theoretical point of view, there is no reason for such an assumption. [...] for an understanding of psychic phenomena we would start from the fact that the human mind enters as object and subject into the scientific process of psychology." - "Natural science, does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves."
Werner Heisenberg

"Observations not only disturb what is to be measured, they produce it." Pascual Jordan

"I would say that in my scientific and philosophical work, my main concern has been with understanding the nature of reality in general and of consciousness in particular as a coherent whole, which is never static or complete but which is an unending process of movement and unfoldment..." - "If [man] thinks of the totality as constituted of independent fragments, then that is how his mind will tend to operate, but if he can include everything coherently and harmoniously in an overall whole that is undivided, unbroken, and without a border then his mind will tend to move in a similar way, and from this will flow an orderly action within the whole."
David Bohm

"Nowadays, any tentative philosophical approach to a world-view should take information coming from contemporary physics into account quite seriously. [...] Some philosophers do still make unrestricted use of classical notions of quite a general nature, such as locality or distinguishability, taken to be obvious ever since Galileo's and Newton's times. Most of them do so without realising that the domains of validity of such notions are known, nowadays, to be severely limited." [...]
"The doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness turns out to be in conflict with quantum mechanics and with facts established by experiment." Bernard d'Espagnat

"I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as

existing, postulates consciousness." Max Planck

"It from bit symbolizes the idea that every item of the physical world has at bottom—at a very deep bottom, in most instances—an immaterial source and explanation; [...] in short, that all things physical are information-theoretic in origin and that this is a participatory universe." - "Is the very mechanism for the universe to come into being meaningless or unworkable or both unless the universe is guaranteed to produce life, consciousness and observership somewhere and for some little time in its history-to-be?" - "The universe does not exist 'out there,' independent of us. We are inescapably involved in bringing about that which appears to be happening. We are not only observers. We are participators. In some strange sense, this is a participatory universe. Physics is no longer satisfied with insights only into particles, fields of force, into geometry, or even into time and space. Today we demand of physics some understanding of existence itself." John Archibald Wheeler

"The mind-stuff of the world is, of course, something more general than our individual conscious minds ... The mind-stuff is not spread in space and time; these are part of the cyclic scheme ultimately derived out of it ... It is necessary to keep reminding ourselves that all knowledge of our environment from which the world of physics is constructed, has entered in the form of messages transmitted along the nerves to the seat of consciousness ... Consciousness is not sharply defined, but fades into subconsciousness; and beyond that we must postulate something indefinite but yet continuous with our mental nature ... It is difficult for the matter-of-fact physicist to accept the view that the substratum of everything is of mental character. But no one can deny that mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience, and all else is remote inference." Sir Arthur Eddington

CHAPTER 2.619.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 4:04 PM

Anyway we're done here. Should some of you do some research anyway, you'll realize that the measurement problem is something very different than what you expected. You'll not see it coming.

CHAPTER 2.620.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:08 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. 🤖 Evidence [here](#).



2.619. by Atla


Anyway we're done here. Should some of you do some research anyway, you'll realize that the measurement problem is something very different than what you expected. You'll not see it coming.

I've done the research, and to repeat: your (and Wigner's) claims about a connection between the measurement problem in QM and consciousness is completely out of touch with all modern, mainstream understanding of the subject and utter New Age hogwash. None of your quotes from physicists who study the subject even come close to suggesting otherwise.

You, I suggest, are the one who needs to learn a little bit more about the subject in question.

CHAPTER 2.621.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 1:32 PM



2.617. by Atla

Your working theory doesn't fit the evidence...

The evidence is that you have made a number of assertions, but seem unable to discuss them in more depth, or properly justify them. My theory offers an explanation for these empirical observations. I'll stick with it until new and contradictory evidence comes to light.

CHAPTER 2.622.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 1:52 PM

Of course I'm unable to do so, you guys have absolutely no idea about the topic. This isn't some kindergarten stuff that one can google during the lunch break, this requires long dedication. How many times do I have to repeat that.

The most relevant aspect of the measurement problem, though definitely not the most mysterious one I'd say, is demonstrated in chapter 3 of the book I mentioned (7 pages long). My theory seems to cover it, but I'll be surprised, to put it mildly, if any of you can say the same. I can't narrow it down any better. And I already typed this issue down, but did that register with any of you? No it didn't.

CHAPTER 2.623.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 2:03 PM





2.622. by Atla

Of course I'm unable to do so, you guys have absolutely no idea about the topic. This isn't some kindergarten stuff that one can google during the lunch break, this requires long dedication. How many times do I have to repeat that.

The most relevant aspect of the measurement problem, though definitely not the most mysterious one I'd say, is demonstrated in chapter 3 of the book I mentioned (7 pages long). My theory seems to cover it, but I'll be surprised, to put it mildly, if any of you can say the same. I can't narrow it down any better. And I already typed this issue down, but did that register with any of you? No it didn't.

Describe a specific measurement process in quantum physics showing exactly what scientists actually do, then point out precisely which step consciousness enters the picture in a way that is fundamentally remarkable and unique to quantum physics. I don't think you can.

Articulating this is the most basic task one could ask of someone who claims to understand the subject better than we do.

(Trust me--you don't.)

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 2 4 .

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 2:04 PM

Atla wrote:Anyway, I don't usually recommend books, but this is in my opinion the best introduction to the measurement problem:

"Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness" by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner (written by physicists)

I had a quick look on Amazon. Kindle edition £4.79. New paperback copy: £97.99! Second hand paperback copy: £21 but it won't arrive until the end of November. But weirdly, when I refreshed the Amazon page the new paperback copy reduced to £37.58. Is that all part of the observer-created-reality? Perhaps if I refresh the page again it'll keep reducing.

I suppose I could get the Kindle edition but then I'd probably be squinting at it on my phone while standing in the rain at my kid's football match (or would be if football matches hadn't been banned for November. Thanks Boris). So I'd rather get it in paperback. Before I do that: Do you give me your word that it's a thumping good page turner that I'll be unable to put down until I've finished it?

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 2 5 .

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 2:36 PM

Atla wrote: The most relevant aspect of the measurement problem, though definitely not the most mysterious one I'd say, is demonstrated in chapter 3 of the book I mentioned (7 pages long).

I decided to go for the Kindle edition to save money in case I get bored of it. I'll read chapter 3 first.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 2 6 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 2:38 PM

2.623. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.622. by Atla

Of course I'm unable to do so, you guys have absolutely no idea about the topic. This isn't some kindergarten stuff that one can google during the lunch break, this requires long dedication. How many times do I have to repeat that.

The most relevant aspect of the measurement problem, though definitely not the most mysterious one I'd say, is demonstrated in chapter 3 of the book I mentioned (7 pages long). My theory seems to cover it, but I'll be surprised, to put it mildly, if any of you can say the same. I can't narrow it down any better. And I already typed this issue down, but did that register with any of you? No it didn't.

Describe a specific measurement process in quantum physics showing exactly what scientists actually do, then point out precisely which step consciousness enters the picture in a way that is fundamentally remarkable and unique to quantum physics. I don't think you can.

Articulating this is the most basic task one could ask of someone who claims to understand the subject better than we do.

(Trust me -- you don't.)

And this is your problem, you decide in advance that you know a topic better than people who have actually looked at it. And this time try to accept that the word 'consciousness' may also be used in different ways than how the GNW model uses it.

Depending on which measurement you decide to perform, the universe will always behave accordingly (hence the perfect connection), but these different behaviours are irreconcilable.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 2 7 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 2:43 PM

Atla wrote: The most relevant aspect of the measurement problem, though definitely not the most mysterious one I'd say, is demonstrated in chapter 3 of the book I mentioned (7 pages long). I decided to go for the Kindle edition to save money in case I get bored of it. I'll read chapter 3 first.

Okay well I won't tell people to just grab a pdf from the net and read it.

It's a legit book, no woo. You can read some of the reviews if you want, many people seem to see it as the best introductory course to the really weird part. Here a few reviews:

"A remarkable and readable presentation of the basic mysteries of science, our universe, and human life. Critically important problems in our understanding are interestingly discussed with perception, depth, and careful objectivity." --Charles Townes, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, inventor of the laser, and Templeton Prize recipient

"I am a theoretical physicist but I must admit I did not fully appreciate the Quantum Enigma until I read the first edition of this book a few years ago. I first learned quantum mechanics over 40 years ago and have actively practiced it. That is, I used it to calculate theoretical predictions. It was only in the last 10 years or so that I asked myself, "What is the electron actually doing when light is emitted from an hydrogen atom?" After reading this book I realized the answer is, "Nobody has the slightest idea!" Fully appreciating the vast gap between the "classical" world we live in and the "quantum world" took some time for me. That kind of profound ignorance takes time to appreciate. I now better understand what I have read in biographical books about Bohr, Einstein, Heisenberg, and Schrodinger. As the realization slowly set in as to what quantum mechanics was saying, these men and other physicists struggled with each other in an almost religious battle. Now over 80 years later we know no more than we did then. In the end, everyone has to come to appreciate the profound ignorance we have at this point in history. For any interested layman or scientist, the Quantum Enigma is a must-read item."

And one for laughs: <https://henry.pha.jhu.edu/quantum.enigma.html>

CHAPTER 2.628.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 3:02 PM

I'm always a little surprised to read comments like this...

"I am a theoretical physicist but I must admit I did not fully appreciate the Quantum Enigma until I read the first edition of this book a few years ago. I first learned quantum mechanics over 40 years ago and have actively practiced it. That is, I used it to calculate theoretical predictions. It was only in the last 10 years or so that I asked myself, "What is the electron actually doing when light is emitted from an hydrogen atom?" After reading this book I realized the answer is, "Nobody has the slightest idea!"...

...from people who've clearly studied physics to first degree level and beyond. In my experience, studying physics to first degree level, and thereby reading things like the Feynman lectures and other QM textbooks and discussing quantum mechanics with lecturers in seminars and so on, I

don't see how it's possible to miss that central lesson about QM. But maybe there are some people who do simply diligently work their way through it as they would any other problem in applied mathematics and don't take time to think about it as anything other than a set of exam problems to solve.

CHAPTER 2.629.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 3:27 PM

2.628. by Steve3007

I'm always a little surprised to read comments like this...

"I am a theoretical physicist but I must admit I did not fully appreciate the Quantum Enigma until I read the first edition of this book a few years ago. I first learned quantum mechanics over 40 years ago and have actively practiced it. That is, I used it to calculate theoretical predictions. It was only in the last 10 years or so that I asked myself, "What is the electron actually doing when light is emitted from an hydrogen atom?" After reading this book I realized the answer is, "Nobody has the slightest idea!"...

...from people who've clearly studied physics to first degree level and beyond. In my experience, studying physics to first degree level, and thereby reading things like the Feynman lectures and other QM textbooks and discussing quantum mechanics with lecturers in seminars and so on, I don't see how it's possible to miss that central lesson about QM. But maybe there are some people who do simply diligently work their way through it as they would any other problem in applied mathematics and don't take time to think about it as anything other than a set of exam problems to solve.

That's because the really weird parts were intentionally left out from the textbooks. For example the Copenhagen treatment of QM was mostly designed to avoid, work around the weirdest metaphysical issues, and concentrate on the practical results. In fact there was a long time, when physicists were ridiculed or could even endanger their careers, when looking into the philosophical underpinnings of the theory. In short:

"Niels Bohr brainwashed a whole generation of theorists into thinking that the job of interpreting quantum theory was done 50 years ago." (1969 Nobel Laureate Murray Gell-Mann)

And the main reason for this isn't even pragmatism and the need to produce results, not philosophy. Instead it's that no one knows what that central lesson you refer to, actually is. Here's a Feynman lecture:

"There was a time when the newspapers said that only twelve men understood the theory of relativity. I do not believe there ever was such a time. There might have been a time when only one man did, because he was the only guy who caught on, before he wrote his paper. But after people read the paper a lot of people understood the theory of relativity in some way or other, certainly more than twelve. On the other hand, I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics. So do not take the lecture too seriously, feeling that you really have to understand in terms of some model what I am going to describe, but just relax and enjoy it. I am going to tell you what nature behaves like. If you will simply admit that maybe she does behave like this, you will find her a delightful, entrancing thing. Do not keep saying to yourself, if you can possibly avoid it, "But how can it be like that?" because you will get 'down the drain', into a blind alley from which nobody has escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that."

No one has escaped that blind alley yet.. so maybe it's best if most scientists don't even try to go there, and just focus on the job.

CHAPTER 2.630.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 3:54 PM

Atla wrote:Here's a Feynman lecture :... "But how can it be like that?" because you will get 'down the drain', into a blind alley from which nobody has escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that."

Feynman said that and similar things in the Feynman lectures on physics which are probably the most well read and well known undergraduate physics textbooks ever written. Every physics undergraduate since the 60's has, or ought to have, read them. My copies were given to me by my father, who also studied physics. That's why when a physics graduate says something like the thing that you quoted and I re-quoted in my previous post I'm surprised.

CHAPTER 2.631.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:04 PM

2.630. by Steve3007

Atla wrote:Here's a Feynman lecture :... "But how can it be like that?" because you will get 'down the drain', into a blind alley from which nobody has escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that."
Feynman said that and similar things in the Feynman lectures on physics which are probably the most well read and well known undergraduate physics textbooks ever written. Every physics undergraduate since the 60's has, or ought to have, read them. My copies were given to me by my father, who also studied physics. That's why when a physics graduate says something like the thing that you quoted and I re-quoted in my previous post I'm surprised.

But that's the general attitude, or at least had been until at least 1980-1990, for both professionals and public: that there really must be no deeper mystery to QM. People like Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Einstein, Neumann etc. were simply confused people who simply invented something

they didn't understand, misunderstood. That Feynman also didn't really know what he was talking about, because obviously many people have learned QM by now.

CHAPTER 2.632.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:08 PM

When that guy you quoted says this:

It was only in the last 10 years or so that I asked myself, "What is the electron actually doing when light is emitted from an hydrogen atom?" After reading this book I realized the answer is, "Nobody has the slightest idea!"

I think to myself "Why only after reading this book? What were you studying at University?"

CHAPTER 2.633.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:15 PM

2.632. by Steve3007

When that guy you quoted says this:

It was only in the last 10 years or so that I asked myself, "What is the electron actually doing when light is emitted from an hydrogen atom?" After reading this book I realized the answer is, "Nobody has the slightest idea!"

I think to myself "Why only after reading this book? What were you studying at University?"

Again: the measurement problem is intentionally left out from textbooks and is not taught at universities. It is *not part* of standard QM studies. Many of the graduates don't even know that it exists, or maybe think that it's nothing more than New Age woo.


Here's a similar example for these kind of things, from the third review I linked:

"That's crazy" a physicist said to me just the other day, when I described the quantum Zeno effect. Yet this physicist has worked lifelong in quantum-intensive research!

All I had mentioned was that, if you observe a quantum system with a short half life, it will not make the transition to the lower state. Your simply observing it (not interacting with it in any way) causes it to remain in its higher-energy state. (Just Google on "quantum Zeno effect," should it happen that you don't believe me!)

CHAPTER 2.634.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:18 PM




2.622. by Atla

Of course I'm unable to do so, you guys have absolutely no idea about the topic. This isn't some kindergarten stuff that one can google during the lunch break, this requires long dedication.

How can we accept your verdict on our ignorance when you cannot or will not demonstrate your own authority on this subject? You tell us how ignorant we are, and imply your own depth of knowledge, but you don't give us the benefit of the latter. If you continue just to tell us we're too stupid to understand, you will achieve nothing. It seems strange for an autistic to be saying this, but: you need to start communicating clearly instead of preaching, and demeaning your audience.

CHAPTER 2.635.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:24 PM



2.633. by Atla

Again: the measurement problem is intentionally left out from textbooks and is not taught at universities.

And yet the internet, the source of most information these days, easily finds a **comprehensible description of the measurement problem**. It doesn't solve the philosophical problems, of course, but it describes them clearly, in a way that (I suggest) any member of this forum could easily understand. Your objection appears to be without foundation; the information is freely available, even if it is not taught at universities. Design isn't taught there either, and yet they turn out thousands of engineers every year....

CHAPTER 2.636.

~

Steve3007 on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:34 PM

Atla wrote: Again: the measurement problem is intentionally left out from textbooks and is not taught at universities.

Which undergraduate physics textbooks are you referring to? You've read some, yes?

CHAPTER 2.637.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:43 PM

2.635. by Pattern-chaser

2.633. by Atla

Again: the measurement problem is intentionally left out from textbooks and is not taught at universities.

*And yet the internet, the source of most information these days, easily finds a **comprehensible description of the measurement problem**. It doesn't solve the philosophical problems, of course, but it describes them clearly, in a way that (I suggest) any member of this forum could easily understand. Your objection appears to be without foundation; the information is freely available, even if it is not taught at universities. Design isn't taught there either, and yet they turn out thousands of engineers every year....*

Yeah I was "waiting" for this comment. :roll:

The Wiki page equates one aspect of the measurement problem, the collapse of wave-functions, with the measurement problem. Takes it out of context, that's the standard treatment to sidestep the bigger issues. Unfortunately you also assume that you know a subject better than those who have actually looked at it.

CHAPTER 2.638.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 4:52 PM

2.636. by Steve3007

Atla wrote: Again: the measurement problem is intentionally left out from textbooks and is not taught at universities.

Which undergraduate physics textbooks are you referring to? You've read some, yes?

I haven't seen a textbook that explores the issue from chapter 3 of the book I linked, but maybe there are some. Now it's becoming less of a taboo.

If the information is really in all the textbooks, then, as you say, how come so many physicists are unaware of it for decades?

CHAPTER 2.639.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:03 PM

2.638. by Atla



If the information is really in all the textbooks, then, as you say, how come so many physicists are unaware of it for decades?

Because it isn't physics. It's philosophical metaphysics, which is a different area of understanding. Some who are highly educated and knowledgeable of physics do not extend their expertise into metaphysics as well. There are so many things to learn, and to know, that we prioritise our own time according to our own personal interests and beliefs. You are trying to introduce an interesting metaphysical conversation - which we have not yet had, as perhaps you suggest? - but confusing the subject with physics too. The subject emerges from physics, but it is not physics.

Also, please stop telling us how no-one else knows anything about this subject, and **enlighten** us. Give us the benefit of **your** understanding, that we might all benefit and learn. How about it? 😊

CHAPTER 2.640.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:05 PM

Atla wrote: If the information is really in all the textbooks, then, as you say, how come so many physicists are unaware of it for decades?

Apart from the Feynman Lectures, the only other undergraduate QM text that immediately springs to mind, which was one of the recommended texts when I was a student in the early 90's, was "Quantum Mechanics" by Alistair I M Rae. As far as I recall it had a section on the measurement problem.

As I've said, if there are people who have studied physics and somehow stayed completely unaware of the philosophical questions arising from QM I assume that it's because they've simply treated the whole subject of physics as an exercise in solving applied mathematics problems. As I recall, when I was a student there were people like that, as well as some who simply found the whole thing too baffling and dropped out, presumably to do something more useful (I remember at least one student in my year who did this).

I remember lecturers in both lectures and seminars were certainly keen not to treat the whole thing as a dry exercise in mathematics and were keen to get across the philosophically interesting parts of it. For my part, that was the main reasoning for studying physics in the first place. It certainly wasn't training for a job! I've used it a bit in parts of my subsequent career, but not much.

CHAPTER 2.641.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:06 PM

2.637. by Atla

The Wiki page equates one aspect of the measurement problem, the collapse of wave-functions, with the measurement problem. Takes it out of context, that's the standard treatment to sidestep the bigger issues.



So explain, please, about the parts that Wikipedia misses. Educate us, instead of asserting our ignorance.

CHAPTER 2.642.

~

Atla on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:29 PM

2.641. by Pattern-chaser

So explain, please, about the parts that Wikipedia misses. Educate us, instead of asserting our ignorance.

Atla wrote: the issue of this perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, between mental content such as human choices, and states of the outside physical world, where the states can be irreconcilable with each other.

Atla wrote: Depending on which measurement you decide to perform, the universe will always behave accordingly (hence the perfect connection), but these different behaviours are irreconcilable.

How does your theory resolve/dismiss this issue? That in a sense the universe appears to 'manifest' in perfect accordance with what you are doing, so you can 'decide' to make the universe be this way of that, event though those ways are mutually exclusive?

CHAPTER 2.643.

~

Faustus5 on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 6:51 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.626. by Atla

And this is your problem, you decide in advance that you know a topic better than people who have actually looked at it.

Except that I **HAVE LOOKED INTO IT!!!!** I've got at least a dozen books in my library that delve into this subject from various angles, and this is why I know that what you are spouting in this thread has no support whatsoever from the mainstream of science. It is literally New Age hogwash.

This is why I am asking you to carefully explain the actual process of the measurement problem

and pinpoint where consciousness enters the picture. Because once you take the care to actually think about this issue in detail, you will find your previous assertions are not backed up by the science.

2.626. by Atla

And this time try to accept that the word 'consciousness' may also be used in different ways than how the GNW model uses it.

If physicists are using the word "consciousness" differently than the way scientists who are actually qualified to study and model consciousness use the term, then physicists are simply and stupidly misusing the word.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 4 4 .

~

Atla on  Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 7:16 PM

2.643. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.626. by Atla

And this is your problem, you decide in advance that you know a topic better than people who have actually looked at it.

Except that I HAVE LOOKED INTO IT!!!! I've got at least a dozen books in my library that delve into this subject from various angles, and this is why I know that what you are spouting in this thread has no support whatsoever from the mainstream of science. It is literally New Age hogwash.

This is why I am asking you to carefully explain the actual process of the measurement problem and pinpoint where consciousness enters the picture. Because once you take the care to actually think about this issue in detail, you will find your previous assertions are not backed up by the science.

2.626. by Atla

And this time try to accept that the word 'consciousness' may also be used in different ways than how the GNW model uses it.

If physicists are using the word "consciousness" differently than the way scientists who are actually qualified to study and model consciousness use the term, then physicists are simply and stupidly misusing the word.

Consciousness can have at least half a dozen different meanings in science and philosophy. Trying to squeeze everything into the box of the GNW is something the likes of Dennett would do.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 4 5 .

~

Steve3007 on  Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 10:50 AM

Steve3007 wrote: Which undergraduate physics textbooks are you referring to? You've read some, yes?

Atla wrote: I haven't seen a textbook that explores the issue from chapter 3 of the book I linked, but maybe there are some. Now it's becoming less of a taboo.

When you say "I haven't seen..." do you mean that you've read some undergraduate physics textbooks and found that they don't contain what you're referring to here? Or do you mean that you haven't looked? Or neither of those two things? At this point, I'd be interested to know: have you studied physics?

CHAPTER 2.646.

~

Steve3007 on  Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 11:29 AM

Atla wrote: ...chapter 3 of the book...

We're talking about the chapter entitled "The Visit to Heg Ahne Poc - A Quantum Parable" yes?

I've just been briefly reading it but had to break off to do something else. First thought: it looks like the sort of parable/analogy that might occur, in various forms, in other popular accounts of QM. I'll read it again when I get some time and comment some more.

CHAPTER 2.647.

~

Faustus5 on  Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7:48 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's *Dangerous Idea* and *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*. Evidence [here](#).



2.644. by Atla

Consciousness can have at least half a dozen different meanings in science and philosophy. Trying to squeeze everything into the box of the GNW is something the likes of Dennett would do.

It's only something that people who want to successfully model consciousness like to do. In other words, it isn't your thing.

CHAPTER 2.648.

~

Atla on  Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 6:15 AM

2.646. by Steve3007

When you say "I haven't seen..." do you mean that you've read some undergraduate physics textbooks and found that they don't contain what you're referring to here? Or do you mean that you haven't looked? Or neither of those two things? At this point, I'd be interested to know: have you studied physics?

I've studied physics at the university (electrical engineering), didn't finish it. You've seen textbooks that explore or at least mention possible universal implications of some sort of observer-dependent reality?

Then why is it that many physicists vehemently deny this possibility, dismiss it as woo. And just ramble something about interactions or decoherence, like those had anything to do with it?

We're talking about the chapter entitled "The Visit to Heg Ahne Poc - A Quantum Parable" yes?

I've just been briefly reading it but had to break off to do something else. First thought: it looks like the sort of parable/analogy that might occur, in various forms, in other popular accounts of QM. I'll read it again when I get some time and comment some more.

Yes that chapter. Now if you understand what it says, wouldn't you say that the universe always seems to 'manifest' in ways that are coherent what we are doing, or thinking even. So in a sense, 'subjective mental' phenomena, and the 'objective physical' outside world, seem to be one and the same kind of thing.

CHAPTER 2.649.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 6:22 AM

2.647. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.644. by Atla

Consciousness can have at least half a dozen different meanings in science and philosophy. Trying to squeeze everything into the box of the GNW is something the likes of Dennett would do. It's only something that people who want to successfully model consciousness like to do. In other words, it isn't your thing.

I consider myself fairly good at modeling consciousness in the GNW sense, thank you. And I pity those who convinced themselves that consciousness in this sense covers everything there is to know.

CHAPTER 2.650.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 12:30 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.649. by Atla

And I pity those who convinced themselves that consciousness in this sense covers everything there is to know.

Get back to us when you can point to any uncontroversial and unchallenged "facts" that this model leaves out. Good luck with that!

And better, do tell us exactly at one point in quantum physics measurements that any concept of "consciousness" plays a unique role worthy of discussion. Even better luck with that!

CHAPTER 2.651.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 1:22 PM

2.650. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

Get back to us when you can point to any uncontroversial and unchallenged "facts" that this model leaves out. Good luck with that!

We already did that with the Hard problem of consciousness thing. You also ended up asserting and denying experience at the same time, maybe you need to familiarize yourself with what a contradiction is.

And better, do tell us exactly at one point in quantum physics measurements that any concept of "consciousness" plays a unique role worthy of discussion. Even better luck with that!

Sure, after you've quoted me saying that consciousness plays a "unique role".

CHAPTER 2.652.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 3:14 PM



2.651. by Atla

...maybe you need to familiarize yourself with what a contradiction is.

...and maybe you would profit from considering how your audience will respond to your words? I started a "Writing style" topic in the Lounge that you might like to sample? If you insult people, they stop listening. It doesn't matter how right you are.

CHAPTER 2.653.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 3:24 PM

2.652. by Pattern-chaser

2.651. by Atla

*...maybe you need to familiarize yourself with what a contradiction is.
...and maybe you would profit from considering how your audience will respond to your words? I started a "Writing style" topic in the Lounge that you might like to sample? If you insult people, they stop listening. It doesn't matter how right you are.*

You guys are usually the ones to start the insults from where I'm standing, and then can't handle it when I return the favor.

CHAPTER 2.654.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 4:27 PM

2.653. by Atla

2.652. by Pattern-chaser

...and maybe you would profit from considering how your audience will respond to your words? I started a "Writing style" topic in the Lounge that you might like to sample? If you insult people, they stop listening. It doesn't matter how right you are.

You guys are usually the ones to start the insults from where I'm standing, and then can't handle it when I return the favor.



Insults are personal attacks. Philosophical discourse - and debate in general - involves addressing only the argument(s) presented. The difference is pretty easy to spot.

CHAPTER 2.655.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 4:50 PM

2.654. by Pattern-chaser

2.653. by Atla

You guys are usually the ones to start the insults from where I'm standing, and then can't handle it when I return the favor.


Insults are personal attacks. Philosophical discourse - and debate in general - involves addressing only the argument(s) presented. The difference is pretty easy to spot.

Right. And my position wasn't attacked so far, I only got a fairly confident, condescending remark from you that I must have read something in some book, that I must not have understood well enough, and I'm basing my wrong ideas on that. Even though, as I said, you don't even seem to be aware what the subject is, and it's impossible for me to explain it in a few posts. And my theories are based on a unification of all scientific knowledge, not just one book.

Or remember the last thread, where I was arguing for the idea that throughout history, people having to do with the autism spectrum, especially Aspies (just think Newton or Einstein for example, who are suspected to have been Aspies) may have introduced more logical thought than usual, which propelled humanity forward. And instead of attacking the (imo pretty sound) idea, you demanded that I say no more, because I'm being super disrespectful or whatever.

CHAPTER 2.656.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 4:57 PM



2.654. by Pattern-chaser

Insults are personal attacks. Philosophical discourse - and debate in general - involves addressing only the argument(s) presented. The difference is pretty easy to spot.

2.655. by Atla

Right. And my position wasn't attacked so far, I only got a fairly confident, condescending remark from you that I must have read something in some book, that I must not have understood well enough, and I'm basing my wrong ideas on that. Even though, as I said, you don't even seem to be aware what the subject is, and it's impossible for me to explain it in a few posts. And my theories are based on a unification of all scientific knowledge, not just one book.

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This is the straw-man approach that autistic people find so difficult to understand about neurotypical communication. My remark was not condescending, but only a reaction to your continuing thread of preaching to us all how we don't understand the problem; that we are not even capable of such understanding.

I never make demands, and certainly not on public forums like this one. What would be the point? I have no means to enforce, or require compliance, with such demands. In that case, you were promoting your ignorant and damaging misunderstandings of autism, and I felt I needed to call attention to this.

CHAPTER 2.657.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 5:09 PM

2.656. by Pattern-chaser

This is the straw-man approach that autistic people find so difficult to understand about neurotypical communication. My remark was not condescending, but only a reaction to your continuing thread of preaching to us all how we don't understand the problem; that we are not even capable of such understanding.

See when you lie like this about me for no good reason, I take it as an insult, an ad hominem. Nowhere did I claim that you guys are incapable of such understanding.

I never make demands, and certainly not on public forums like this one. What would be the point? I have no means to enforce, or require compliance, with such demands. In that case, you were promoting your ignorant and damaging misunderstandings of autism, and I felt I needed to call attention to this.

Are you saying that Aspies have nothing to do with the autism spectrum, or where was the ignorant/damaging misunderstanding?

CHAPTER 2.658.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Monday, November 9, 2020 at 4:36 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.651. by Atla

You also ended up asserting and denying experience at the same time, maybe you need to familiarize yourself with what a contradiction is.

I did no such thing. I merely rejected your goofy, evidence-free and metaphysics based conception of what experience is, which any serious and scientific model of consciousness will have zero time

for.

Glad you're backing away from the New Age quantum physics/consciousness stuff, though. It is for the best, really.

CHAPTER 2.659.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 9, 2020 at 5:35 PM

2.658. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.651. by Atla

You also ended up asserting and denying experience at the same time, maybe you need to familiarize yourself with what a contradiction is.

I did no such thing. I merely rejected your goofy, evidence-free and metaphysics based conception of what experience is, which any serious and scientific model of consciousness will have zero time for.

Glad you're backing away from the New Age quantum physics/consciousness stuff, though. It is for the best, really.

Again you are merely demonstrating your ignorance about what a scientific model of human consciousness even is. For some reason you also forgot to quote the statement I'm supposed to be backing away from. Weird how some people will go so far to show that they have no credibility.

CHAPTER 2.660.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 9, 2020 at 5:44 PM

I'm really just stating basic things on philosophy forums, and usually no one gets them. The possible philosophies I'm actually interested in are 5-10 steps beyond this. Oh well I'll calculate them by myself.

CHAPTER 2.661.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 2:00 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.659. by Atla

Again you are merely demonstrating your ignorance about what a scientific model of human consciousness even is.

And of course, you couldn't articulate or point out so much as one mistake or factual error I've made, anywhere. Not even one. So much for credibility, eh?

2.659. by Atla

For some reason you also forgot to quote the statement I'm supposed to be backing away from. Weird how some people will go so far to show that they have no credibility.

Several times, I've requested that you describe the actual measurement process in quantum physics and identify precisely where and how consciousness enters into the picture. You won't. You can't. That's what backing away from a preposterous claim looks like.

CHAPTER 2.662.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 5:09 PM



2.660. by Atla

I'm really just stating basic things on philosophy forums, and usually no one gets them. The possible philosophies I'm actually interested in are 5-10 steps beyond this. Oh well I'll calculate them by myself.

No, you don't "state" things, you refer indirectly to these things, sometimes offering us reading lists or links. But you never tell us what these things are. As for this "5-10 steps beyond this" philosophy, this is a perfect example. You give us no hint of the subject matter this philosophy considers, but only imply that we are too retarded in *our* philosophy to keep up with you. And maybe we are. Without some simple and clear words from you, we'll never know, will we?

CHAPTER 2.663.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 7:11 PM

I explicitly, directly wrote down the main issue at least four times. Woosh.

Maybe you people think that being stuck in a 19th century worldview is a virtue. After all, our professional philosophers didn't make it further either.

CHAPTER 2.664.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 12:20 PM



2.663. by Atla

I explicitly, directly wrote down the main issue at least four times. Woosh.

Please offer a link to one of these times. I will gladly read what I missed....

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 6 5 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 6:25 PM

2.664. by Pattern-chaser

Please offer a link to one of these times. I will gladly read what I missed....

viewtopic.php?f=12&t=16848&start=855#p371189

Here it was stated 3 times, why do you guys keep ignoring it. I'm still awaiting your reply how your working theory covers this btw.

Pattern-chaser wrote: I'll stick with my working theory for now; it fits the evidence presented so far...

Also, that few pages long chapter from that book also contains the best demonstration (through an example) that I've seen yet, for this issue.

As I said, this aspect of the measurement problem probably shows that mental content and the outside physical world are of the same kind, in other words it's probably a proof for the nondual philosophical paradigm. Which is maybe the least weird thing about the measurement problem, and can be understood after a major philosophical overhaul, but that's what you asked proof for.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 6 6 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 8:03 PM

2.661. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

And of course, you couldn't articulate or point out so much as one mistake or factual error I've made, anywhere. Not even one. So much for credibility, eh?

Your mistake continues to be epic, failing to address or even grasp the Hard problem. The GNW deals with how human consciousness is structured (easy problems), but says nothing about what consciousness is anyway. You were told this repeatedly.

I've seen people who went nuts because of people like you. They finally cracked, and concluded that P-zombies must be real, and they are everywhere. 😊

Several times, I've requested that you describe the actual measurement process in quantum physics and identify precisely where and how consciousness enters into the picture. You won't. You can't. That's what backing away from a preposterous claim looks like.

Yeah this has nothing to do with anything I wrote. It's not a process. Consciousness doesn't 'enter the picture' at a 'where' and 'how' like that, what are you talking about.

CHAPTER 2.667.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 8:37 PM

'Physics encounters consciousness' is a metaphor. It means that human consciousness (for example the things we know, the decisions we make, and everything else too in human consciousness) are an inextricable part of the known universe. And under the right circumstances can even take or appear to take an active role in 'shaping' the known universe. How the known universe 'manifests' from multiple or perhaps an infinite number of possibilities, where the possible different manifestations also happen to be irreconcilable with each other.

Ironically it's exactly the nondualist paradigm which doesn't require a "unique role" for human consciousness in any of this. So I'm like advocating the opposite of what I'm accused of. It's the accuser who is unaware what his own position entails, in the light of modern scientific evidence.

CHAPTER 2.668.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 1:34 PM

This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).



2.666. by Atla

Your mistake continues to be epic, failing to address or even grasp the Hard problem.

And your mistake is that you continually beg the question and completely ignore that **the very existence and coherence of the "hard problem" has been disputed since the moment Chalmers introduced the term..** Like members of a cult, you "hard problem" faithful have no capacity to comprehend that others approach the subject of consciousness with completely different tools and assumptions than you do.

So contrary to your laughable criticisms, my understanding of how scientific models work is

perfectly fine. What you need to understand is that scientific models have no place for the metaphysical dreams of philosophers.

2.666. by Atla

The GNW deals with how human consciousness is structured (easy problems), but says nothing about what consciousness is anyway. You were told this repeatedly.

The GNW model says exactly what consciousness is. It simply has no room for your metaphysics-based "understanding" of consciousness. You were told this repeatedly.

2.666. by Atla

It's not a process. Consciousness doesn't 'enter the picture' at a 'where' and 'how' like that, what are you talking about.

Good, then I will continue to hold that the mainstream consensus of quantum physics, in which it has absolutely nothing to do with consciousness in any sense of the term, is correct.

CHAPTER 2.669.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 1:37 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.667. by Atla

So I'm like advocating the opposite of what I'm accused of. It's the accuser who is unaware what his own position entails, in the light of modern scientific evidence.

What specific scientific evidence, and how specifically does it have anything--anything at all!--to do with human consciousness?

If what you are suggesting isn't complete nonsense, you wouldn't have so much trouble being specific about what you are claiming.

CHAPTER 2.670.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5:36 PM



2.665. by Atla

2.664. by Pattern-chaser

Please offer a link to one of these times. I will gladly read what I missed...

viewtopic.php?f=12&t=16848&start=855#p371189

Here it was stated 3 times, why do you guys keep ignoring it.

OK, let's have a look. 

2.642. by Atla

2.641. by Pattern-chaser

So explain, please, about the parts that Wikipedia misses. Educate us, instead of asserting our ignorance.

Atla wrote: the issue of this perfect correlation/connection/whatever we want to call it, between mental content such as human choices, and states of the outside physical world, where the states can be irreconcilable with each other.

Atla wrote: Depending on which measurement you decide to perform, the universe will always behave accordingly (hence the perfect connection), but these different behaviours are irreconcilable. How does your theory resolve/dismiss this issue? That in a sense the universe appears to 'manifest' in perfect accordance with what you are doing, so you can 'decide' to make the universe be this way of that, even though those ways are mutually exclusive?

The anomaly of wave-particle duality was already well-known and well-pondered in 1970, when my physics teacher explained it to me. The understanding I was given was that ... we don't (yet?) fully understand how the universe works. Is your frustration merely impatience that we haven't figured it out yet?

2.665. by Atla

As I said, this aspect of the measurement problem probably shows that mental content and the outside physical world are of the same kind, in other words it's probably a proof for the nondual philosophical paradigm.

The kindest thing I can say about this is that it's highly speculative. Wave-particle duality proves nondual philosophy? It's difficult to see how.

So is this really what you've been telling us is ignored by, and unknown to, physicists and/or philosophers? It is neither. It simply remains unsolved, so far.

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5:47 PM



2.667. by Atla

'Physics encounters consciousness' is a metaphor. It means that human consciousness (for example the things we know, the decisions we make, and everything else too in human consciousness) are an inextricable part of the known universe. And under the right circumstances can even take or appear to take an active role in 'shaping' the known universe.

When we look for particles, we find particles. When we look for waves, we find waves. We find what we look for. In addition, it seems that the QM probability function only collapses following observation by a conscious observer. This seems strange to us, admittedly, but I don't think it is a justification for believing that these conscious observers actually **shape** the known universe.

You seem to be focussing on phenomena that we don't understand, and leaping to explanatory conclusions without evidence or other foundation. Your thoughts are *hypotheses*, I think, not justified conclusions. So far, humanity has not succeeded in explaining these things, but you talk of "modern scientific evidence" as though we have, but it's been ignored. Not so, to the best of my knowledge. If you have information I haven't heard about, present it, please. I'm always happy to learn something new.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 7 2 .

~

Robert66 on 🕒 Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 6:03 PM



'scientific models have no place for the metaphysical dreams of philosophers.'

So rigidly bound - facts inside, dreams outside. Why should any subject matter be off-limits to scientific enquiry?

'human consciousness ... under the right circumstances can even take or appear to take an active role in 'shaping' the known universe.'

Yeah, well ... under the right circumstances (viewing angle) a cloud can look like a donkey.

C H A P T E R 2 . 6 7 3 .

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, November 20, 2020 at 5:41 PM

2.669. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

And your mistake is that you continually beg the question and completely ignore that the very existence and coherence of the "hard problem" has been disputed since the moment Chalmers introduced the term.. Like members of a cult, you "hard problem" faithful have no capacity to comprehend that others approach the subject of consciousness with completely different tools and assumptions than you do.

So contrary to your laughable criticisms, my understanding of how scientific models work is perfectly fine. What you need to understand is that scientific models have no place for the metaphysical dreams of philosophers.

It's your objections that are laughable. The shape of the Earth is also 'disputed', does that mean that therefore the issue isn't settled at all? For anyone with some semblance of intellect, the shape of the Earth is NOT flat, and the Hard problem IS an existing, coherent problem.

It is you who seems to totally lack the capacity to comprehend what kind of issues can be addressed with GNW tools, and what kind of issues can't be addressed. You also fail to comprehend that YOU are stuck in a most ridiculous metaphysical dream, and the Hard problem is pointing that out.

The GNW model says exactly what consciousness is. It simply has no room for your metaphysics-based "understanding" of consciousness. You were told this repeatedly.

No, it says how human consciousness is shaped. It can't address what consciousness is, because that is currently unknown. That is the hard problem, get your facts straight.

Good, then I will continue to hold that the mainstream consensus of quantum physics, in which it has absolutely nothing to do with consciousness in any sense of the term, is correct.

That is not the mainstream consensus, you continue to repeat your ignorance. The mainstream consensus is to stick to instrumentalism, and avoid taking philosophical stances at all.

For the minority who do not avoid it, the majority take the position that the measurement problem is unresolved. Based on your popularity contest we can't say for sure that consciousness isn't involved in any sense.

What specific scientific evidence, and how specifically does it have anything--anything at all!--to do with human consciousness?

If what you are suggesting isn't complete nonsense, you wouldn't have so much trouble being specific about what you are claiming.

viewtopic.php?f=12&t=16848&start=855#p371189

Here I wrote it down 3 times. You can also read that chapter I linked I'm getting tired of repeating myself.

It's not complete nonsense, but something that seems to happen 100% of the time. Your beliefs are outdated nonsense.

And there is zero reason to believe that it has to do with human consciousness specifically.

You need to grow up at this point.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, November 20, 2020 at 5:57 PM

2.671. by Pattern-chaser

The anomaly of wave-particle duality was already well-known and well-pondered in 1970, when my physics teacher explained it to me. The understanding I was given was that ... we don't (yet?) fully understand how the universe works. Is your frustration merely impatience that we haven't figured it out yet?

The kindest thing I can say about this is that it's highly speculative. Wave-particle duality proves nondual philosophy? It's difficult to see how.

So is this really what you've been telling us is ignored by, and unknown to, physicists and/or philosophers? It is neither. It simply remains unsolved, so far.

When we look for particles, we find particles. When we look for waves, we find waves. We find what we look for. In addition, it seems that the QM probability function only collapses following observation by a conscious observer. This seems strange to us, admittedly, but I don't think it is a justification for believing that these conscious observers actually shape the known universe.

You seem to be focussing on phenomena that we don't understand, and leaping to explanatory conclusions without evidence or other foundation. Your thoughts are hypotheses, I think, not justified conclusions. So far, humanity has not succeeded in explaining these things, but you talk of "modern scientific evidence" as though we have, but it's been ignored. Not so, to the best of my knowledge. If you have information I haven't heard about, present it, please. I'm always happy to learn something new.

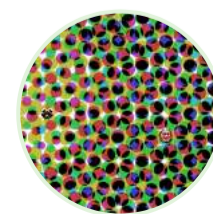
You seem to be incapable of addressing the actual point I keep making. Do we always find what we look for, expect? Yes. Are those different possibilities irreconcilable? Yes. In other word how the known universe 'manifests' to us, how it gets shaped from our perspective, does have a perfect connection/correlation/whatever we want to call it, with our mental content.

Yes it's mysterious and unresolved how all that happens and what it means etc., but the above part is an already established fact whether people like it or not. So the above part has pretty much proven the nondual paradigm. (Unless we happen to be stuck in some kind of stupid brain-in-a-vat scenario, or this is all a simulation etc.)

~

Sy Borg on 🕒 Friday, November 20, 2020 at 9:24 PM

Neither of your views are "laughable". You are presenting models originally devised by influential thinkers. We naturally gravitate to positions closest to our personal assessments.



2.673. by Atla

The GNW model says exactly what consciousness is. It simply has no room for your metaphysics-based "understanding" of consciousness. You were told this repeatedly.

No, it says how human consciousness is shaped. It can't address what consciousness is, because that is currently unknown. That is the hard problem ...

The debate about what consciousness is and how it emerged is a philosophy forum staple. As far as I can tell, simply being alive and awake means being conscious, and if the organism has a brain, then the brain shapes those raw sensations. This is not the "official" position of most neuroscientists, many of whom have long been certain that the brain is the only possible generator of consciousness and that brainless organisms feel nothing at all.

I personally find that view presumptive. Neuroscientists have been claiming that the brain is the sole generator of consciousness for a long time without, to be honest, having much of a clue how the brain might generate consciousness. At least both scientists and philosophers would agree that brains are responsible for the aspects of consciousness that we value. So, if there is some kind of minimal consciousness in a vegetative state, none of us want it. Coma is a very different state to deep sleep, but we imagine coma to be a permanent deep sleep, but that is also an assumption, perhaps based on hope.

CHAPTER 2.676.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 5:38 AM

2.675. by Greta

Neither of your views are "laughable". You are presenting models originally devised by influential thinkers. We naturally gravitate to positions closest to our personal assessments.

2.673. by Atla

No, it says how human consciousness is shaped. It can't address what consciousness is, because that is currently unknown. That is the hard problem ...

The debate about what consciousness is and how it emerged is a philosophy forum staple. As far as I can tell, simply being alive and awake means being conscious, and if the organism has a brain, then the brain shapes those raw sensations. This is not the "official" position of most neuroscientists, many of whom have long been certain that the brain is the only possible generator of consciousness and that brainless organisms feel nothing at all.

I personally find that view presumptive. Neuroscientists have been claiming that the brain is the sole generator of consciousness for a long time without, to be honest, having much of a clue how the brain might generate consciousness. At least both scientists and philosophers would agree that brains are responsible for the aspects of consciousness that we value. So, if there is some kind of minimal consciousness in a vegetative state, none of us want it. Coma is a very different state to deep sleep, but we imagine coma to be a permanent deep sleep, but that is also an assumption, perhaps based on hope.

I continue to think that what you say somewhat misses the point too, it tends to validate Faustus's / Dennett's confusion. Yeah it's entirely possible (and as you know I share this view) that a model of human consciousness can't be complete without incorporating things like the 'gut-brain', and metabolism, and the spinal nerves etc., perhaps even the heart with its electric fields etc. and all the electric fields of all the organs, and perhaps electric fields of the surrounding etc. and so on.

However I think it's also true that the 'head-brain' covers at least 90% of the issue of human consciousness, and this has been thoroughly proven to be the case via neuroscience in the last 100 years.

Yes the above are different competing models for human consciousness. They are still the Easy problems however. How a sense of being for humans comes to be is still the territory of the Easy problems.

The Hard problem is something else, why is there consciousness at all. There is no reason to believe that it has anything to do with being alive, or that it is generated. If it's not generated but universal, then there isn't really a model for it, because there isn't anything that could be modeled. (I read somewhere btw that nowadays a few prominent neuroscientists claim that consciousness may be universal, guess times are changing a bit.)

CHAPTER 2.677.

~

Sy Borg on 🕒 Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 9:34 AM



2.676. by Atla

The Hard problem is something else, why is there consciousness at all. There is no reason to believe that it has anything to do with being alive, or that it is generated. If it's not generated but universal, then there isn't really a model for it, because there isn't anything that could be modeled. (I read somewhere btw that nowadays a few prominent neuroscientists claim that consciousness may be universal, guess times are changing a bit.)

It depends on what we mean by consciousness. You are no doubt aware of Kaku's "physicist version" of panpsychism, attributing a unit of consciousness to each sense and response, though his examples appear not to consider the internal senses and responses of the body systems you mentioned above.

By the same token, we can consider panvitalism, which again depends on definitions. So a rock is no more alive than it is conscious, but it can be thought of as part of larger living systems, just as calcium carbonate molecules in our bones are no more alive than rocks but they are part of a living entity.

Where does a life or consciousness start or stop? Reality seems to consist of things and their emanations, a division that becomes notoriously hard to parse on the quantum scale, hence subatomic "wavicles". At what point are things and their impacts on environment separate? Eg.

Are the atmosphere and magnetospheres part of the Earth or its products? If so, are the hydrosphere and biosphere also just a products of the Earth, or part of it?

These are questions that are perhaps more of interest to philosophers than scientists. There's less scientists can do with such questions in their work than more focussed and practical questions such as "How much will the atmosphere heat up in the future?" and "How will climate change affect hydrological cycles?".

I wonder if emergences are misunderstood? As far as I can tell, emergences are thought to create completely novel phenomena, but I would say it's more a matter of rapid major change of pre-existing phenomena. So the first microbe would have been very similar to the last non living bundle of complex chemicals that preceded it. A newly ignited star might now have nuclear reactions within but the protostar before the ignition was no weakling - still a humongous, extremely hot object in space.

So the first "conscious" organism would differ only slightly from the most complex reflexive organism that preceded it. So it seems with all emergences.

CHAPTER 2.678.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 10:28 AM

2.677. by Greta

It depends on what we mean by consciousness. You are no doubt aware of Kaku's "physicist version" of panpsychism, attributing a unit of consciousness to each sense and response, though his examples appear not to consider the internal senses and responses of the body systems you mentioned above.

(Sorry I'll have to cut up your comment into segments, I don't like doing that either.)

I'm not really aware of the above. He seemed to be talking about coming up with a way to count feedback loops? Do machines that use feedback loops have units of consciousness?

I don't see what that has to do with panpsychism. Or the question what consciousness (in the Hard problem sense) is anyway.

By the same token, we can consider panvitalism, which again depends on definitions. So a rock is no more alive than it is conscious, but it can be thought of as part of larger living systems, just as calcium carbonate molecules in our bones are no more alive than rocks but they are part of a living entity.

It seems to be rather arbitrary what we categorize as living or non-living. We could even say that the entire universe is alive. There seems to be no reason to make the age-old assumption that this anything to do with consciousness (in the Hard problem sense).

Where does a life or consciousness start or stop? Reality seems to consist of things and their emanations, a division that becomes notoriously hard to parse on the quantum scale, hence subatomic "wavicles". At what point are things and their impacts on environment separate? Eg. Are the atmosphere and magnetospheres part of the Earth or its products? If so, are the hydrosphere and biosphere also just a products of the Earth, or part of it?

Reality seems to consist of things and their emanations, but this age-old picture was thoroughly destroyed by modern science. There is no such division, everything is on 'equal footing' in the universe without separations.

There is also no division between the large-scale world and the quantum-scale world. This was merely a convenient lie that was popularized in the early days of quantum theory. Recently with advances in technology, this lie has become untenable.

And there's no reason to think to begin with, that the above two kinds of divisions were identical/related to each other.

These are questions that are perhaps more of interest to philosophers than scientists. There's less scientists can do with such questions in their work than more focussed and practical questions such as "How much will the atmosphere heat up in the future?" and "How will climate change affect hydrological cycles?"

That's why most philosophers and scientists are lagging behind. It can already be stated that Hard problem probably lies beyond such issues.

I wonder if emergences are misunderstood? As far as I can tell, emergences are thought to create completely novel phenomena, but I would say it's more a matter of rapid major change of pre-existing phenomena. So the first microbe would have been very similar to the last non living bundle of complex chemicals that preceded it. A newly ignited star might now have nuclear reactions within but the protostar before the ignition was no weakling - still a humongous, extremely hot object in space.

So the first "conscious" organism would differ only slightly from the most complex reflexive organism that preceded it. So it seems with all emergences.

Strong emergence is perhaps the most widely accepted form of crazy magical thinking in science. To the best of our knowledge, nothing extra is ever created in the universe. As apparent complexity around these parts of the universe goes up, we simply encounter newer and newer things and patterns we haven't seen before. But they didn't 'emerge out of nothing', they are just as much inseparable parts of the universe as is everything else.

So then people applied this strong emergence to consciousness as well: at some point, when the conditions were right, it just emerged out of nothing, popped out of nothing. Some scientists warn us that this looks like magic nothing more.

CHAPTER 2.679.

~

2.678. by Atla



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So then people applied this strong emergence to consciousness as well: at some point, when the conditions were right, it just emerged out of nothing, popped out of nothing. Some scientists warn us that this looks like magic nothing more.

You are right that nothing new is created from nothing (ignoring the possibility of something new emerging from the 'quantum foam'...), but some parts of the universe can *reconfigure*, such that, while no new parts are created, nevertheless a new *combination* emerges. But it doesn't emerge from nothing. As Greta says, the final product of emergence differs little from the product that immediately precedes it. But the *whole* process of emergence can produce an emergent product that hasn't been seen before. This is not magic.

CHAPTER 2.680.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 3:03 PM

2.679. by Pattern-chaser

You are right that nothing new is created from nothing (ignoring the possibility of something new emerging from the 'quantum foam'...), but some parts of the universe can reconfigure, such that, while no new parts are created, nevertheless a new combination emerges. But it doesn't emerge from nothing. As Greta says, the final product of emergence differs little from the product that immediately precedes it. But the whole process of emergence can produce an emergent product that hasn't been seen before. This is not magic.

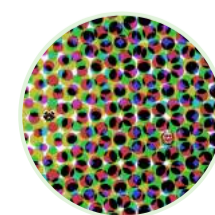
Yes that's weak emergence, which is the correct view imo, so we shouldn't be able to get consciousness (in the Hard problem sense) out of unconscious stuff.

The problem is with the belief in strong emergence as I said above. Where the whole is more than the sum of the parts, something extra comes out of certain combinations.

CHAPTER 2.681.

~

Sy Borg on 🕒 Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 10:22 PM



2.678. by Atla

2.677. by Greta

It depends on what we mean by consciousness. You are no doubt aware of Kaku's "physicist version" of panpsychism, attributing a unit of consciousness to each sense and response, though his examples appear not to consider the internal senses and responses of the body systems you mentioned above.

(Sorry I'll have to cut up your comment into segments, I don't like doing that either.)

I'm not really aware of the above. He seemed to be talking about coming up with a way to count feedback loops? Do machines that use feedback loops have units of consciousness?

I don't see what that has to do with panpsychism. Or the question what consciousness (in the Hard problem sense) is anyway.

Fair point, as per the limited way MK presented the idea, but the concept can be extrapolated; an atom absorbing an electron and emitting a photon.

2.678. by Atla

By the same token, we can consider panvitalism, which again depends on definitions. So a rock is no more alive than it is conscious, but it can be thought of as part of larger living systems, just as calcium carbonate molecules in our bones are no more alive than rocks but they are part of a living entity.

It seems to be rather arbitrary what we categorize as living or non-living. We could even say that the entire universe is alive. There seems to be no reason to make the age-old assumption that this anything to do with consciousness (in the Hard problem sense).

I am not convinced that life and consciousness can be entirely parsed but the idea is too speculative for me to defend on a forum.

2.678. by Atla

I wonder if emergences are misunderstood? As far as I can tell, emergences are thought to create completely novel phenomena, but I would say it's more a matter of rapid major change of pre-existing phenomena. So the first microbe would have been very similar to the last non living bundle of complex chemicals that preceded it. A newly ignited star might now have nuclear reactions within but the protostar before the ignition was no weakling – still a humongous, extremely hot object in space.

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Strong emergence is perhaps the most widely accepted form of crazy magical thinking in science. To the best of our knowledge, nothing extra is ever created in the universe. As apparent complexity around these parts of the universe goes up, we simply encounter newer and newer things and patterns we haven't seen before. But they didn't 'emerge out of nothing', they are just as much inseparable parts of the universe as is everything else.

So then people applied this strong emergence to consciousness as well: at some point, when the conditions were right, it just emerged out of nothing, popped out of nothing. Some scientists warn us that this looks like magic nothing more.

Yes, what is magic but the failure to perceive causal chains, hence the notion of blissful ignorance. Children can enjoy the magic of Santa at Christmastime if they don't know what's going on.

Ultimately, emergence is the result of thresholds, breaking points being reached, but there is always significant gradation leading up to that point, as per the abiogenesis and stellar ignition examples given earlier.

So there is only a graded difference between the simplest brains and the most complex nerve rings, which came from nerve cords, which came from nerve nets, which emerged from neurons (which originally had a motor functions) ... which came from from glial cells, beget by action potentials, beget by membrane potentials, beget by ion channels. I know little about the details of these, but I have "faith" that there causal chains and graded forms exist that lead to all so-called strong emergences in nature, including consciousness.

If, with consciousness, "the lights ever came on", the first "lights" would have been maximally dim and short-lived. Whether that occurred in a microbe, a brained animal or an atom is hard to say.

CHAPTER 2.682.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 7:27 AM

2.681. by Greta

Yes, what is magic but the failure to perceive causal chains, hence the notion of blissful ignorance. Children can enjoy the magic of Santa at Christmastime if they don't know what's going on.

Ultimately, emergence is the result of thresholds, breaking points being reached, but there is always significant gradation leading up to that point, as per the abiogenesis and stellar ignition examples given earlier.

So there is only a graded difference between the simplest brains and the most complex nerve rings, which came from nerve cords, which came from nerve nets, which emerged from neurons (which originally had a motor functions) ... which came from from glial cells, beget by action potentials, beget by membrane potentials, beget by ion channels. I know little about the details of these, but I have "faith" that there causal chains and graded forms exist that lead to all so-called strong emergences in nature, including consciousness.

If, with consciousness, "the lights ever came on", the first "lights" would have been maximally dim and short-lived. Whether that occurred in a microbe, a brained animal or an atom is hard to say.

Yes and that's why science and philosophy are probably at a dead end now, when it comes to consciousness (in the Hard problem sense). They have "faith" that at some point, genuine magic happens, and we get a dimmest instance of consciousness out of a lack of consciousness. Even though consciousness is probably not a causal chain issue, as there's no known way to measure it.

Probably the only way forward is to abandon this hope, and start examining our major underlying philosophical assumptions.

CHAPTER 2.683.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 12:45 PM



2.679. by Pattern-chaser

You are right that nothing new is created from nothing (ignoring the possibility of something new emerging from the 'quantum foam'...), but some parts of the universe can reconfigure, such that, while no new parts are created, nevertheless a new combination emerges. But it doesn't emerge from nothing. As Greta says, the final product of emergence differs little from the product that immediately precedes it. But the whole process of emergence can produce an emergent product that hasn't been seen before. This is not magic.

2.680. by Atla

Yes that's weak emergence, which is the correct view imo, so we shouldn't be able to get consciousness (in the Hard problem sense) out of unconscious stuff.

The problem is with the belief in strong emergence as I said above. Where the whole is more than the sum of the parts, something extra comes out of certain combinations.

Emergence describes something unexpected (according to a simple analysis); it's what you call "strong emergence". Your "weak" emergence is little more than *combination*. But the vocabulary is of little import. 😊

When emergence happens, it happens for the same reason that reductionism can fail (but in reverse). If the function of the whole is defined mainly by its parts, then reductionism can work on the whole, and emergence probably will not occur when the parts are combined.

But if the function of the whole is (strongly) dependent on the interconnections between the parts, reductionism will not work, and emergence may occur: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This isn't surprising, and it isn't magic. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts because the function of the whole is dependent on the interconnections between the parts, and it therefore is more than the simple sum of its components. It is the sum of its parts and their interconnections. No magic.

The human brain is a great example of emergence. Its function is heavily (wholly?) dependent on the interconnection of its parts, to the extent that the parts themselves are *almost* irrelevant. 😊 So, although brains may seem a bit magical, they're not. They're just heavily connection-oriented, which gives rise to an emergent product.



Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 12:52 PM



2.682. by Atla

2.681. by Greta

Yes, what is magic but the failure to perceive causal chains, hence the notion of blissful ignorance. Children can enjoy the magic of Santa at Christmastime if they don't know what's going on.

Ultimately, emergence is the result of thresholds, breaking points being reached, but there is always significant gradation leading up to that point, as per the abiogenesis and stellar ignition examples given earlier.

So there is only a graded difference between the simplest brains and the most complex nerve rings, which came from nerve cords, which came from nerve nets, which emerged from neurons (which originally had a motor functions) ... which came from from glial cells, beget by action potentials, beget by membrane potentials, beget by ion channels. I know little about the details of these, but I have "faith" that there causal chains and graded forms exist that lead to all so-called strong emergences in nature, including consciousness.

If, with consciousness, "the lights ever came on", the first "lights" would have been maximally dim and short-lived. Whether that occurred in a microbe, a brained animal or an atom is hard to say.

Yes and that's why science and philosophy are probably at a dead end now, when it comes to consciousness (in the Hard problem sense). They have "faith" that at some point, genuine magic happens, and we get a dimmest instance of consciousness out of a lack of consciousness. Even though consciousness is probably not a causal chain issue, as there's no known way to measure it.

Probably the only way forward is to abandon this hope, and start examining our major underlying philosophical assumptions.

I think the 'magic' is what happens when you ignore the contribution of interconnections to the function of a whole. It looks like magic, just as a smart phone might look to Shakespeare.



Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 1:01 PM

2.683. by Pattern-chaser

Emergence describes something unexpected (according to a simple analysis); it's what you call "strong emergence". Your "weak" emergence is little more than combination. But the vocabulary is of little import. 😊

When emergence happens, it happens for the same reason that reductionism can fail (but in reverse). If the function of the whole is defined mainly by its parts, then reductionism can work on the whole, and emergence probably will not occur when the parts are combined.

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I think you got things mixed up again.

We can say that a high-level phenomenon is strongly emergent with respect to a low-level domain when the high-level phenomenon arises from the low-level domain, but truths concerning that phenomenon are not deducible even in principle from truths in the low-level domain. Strong emergence is the notion of emergence that is most common in philosophical discussions of emergence, and is the notion invoked by the British emergentists of the 1920s.

We can say that a high-level phenomenon is weakly emergent with respect to a low-level domain when the high-level phenomenon arises from the low-level domain, but truths concerning that phenomenon are unexpected given the principles governing the low-level domain. Weak emergence is the notion of emergence that is most common in recent scientific discussions of emergence, and is the notion that is typically invoked by proponents of emergence in complex systems theory.

CHAPTER 2.686.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 1:39 PM



2.683. by Pattern-chaser

Emergence describes something unexpected (according to a simple analysis); it's what you call "strong emergence". Your "weak" emergence is little more than combination. **But the vocabulary is of little import.** 😊

When emergence happens, it happens for the same reason that reductionism can fail (but in reverse). If the function of the whole is defined mainly by its parts, then reductionism can work on the whole, and emergence probably will not occur when the parts are combined.

But if the function of the whole is (strongly) dependent on the interconnections between the parts, reductionism will not work, and emergence may occur: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This isn't surprising, and it isn't magic. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts because the function of the whole is dependent on the interconnections between the parts, and it therefore is more than the simple sum of its components. It is the sum of its parts and their interconnections. No magic.

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2.685. by Atla

I think you got things mixed up again.

No, I think you focussed on the vocabulary, not the issue. Read the rest of my post, please. Thanks.

CHAPTER 2.687.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 1:55 PM

2.686. by Pattern-chaser

2.683. by Pattern-chaser

Emergence describes something unexpected (according to a simple analysis); it's what you call "strong emergence". Your "weak" emergence is little more than combination. **But the vocabulary is of little import.** 😊

When emergence happens, it happens for the same reason that reductionism can fail (but in reverse). If the function of the whole is defined mainly by its parts, then reductionism can work on the whole, and emergence probably will not occur when the parts are combined.

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2.685. by Atla

I think you got things mixed up again.

No, I think you focussed on the vocabulary, not the issue. Read the rest of my post, please. Thanks.

For the ~fourth time then: you are talking about weak emergence. I was talking about strong emergence. The distinction between them is the very issue, when it comes to the Hard problem of consciousness.

CHAPTER 2.688.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 4:20 PM



2.687. by Atla

I was talking about strong emergence. The distinction between them is the very issue, when it comes to the Hard problem of consciousness.

Who's discussing consciousness? Not me. This is about the *absurd hegemony of science*, in general, and about *emergence* in this sub-thread of the discussion. If you want to include consciousness too, there will be little this topic *doesn't* cover. Too much for one topic, methinks.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 4:36 PM

2.688. by Pattern-chaser

2.687. by Atla

I was talking about strong emergence. The distinction between them is the very issue, when it comes to the Hard problem of consciousness.

Who's discussing consciousness? Not me. This is about the absurd hegemony of science, in general, and about emergence in this sub-thread of the discussion. If you want to include consciousness too, there will be little this topic doesn't cover. Too much for one topic, methinks.

YOU replied to comments of mine that were discussing emergence in the context of the Hard problem of consciousness.

~

Faustus5 on 🕒 Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 4:46 PM



This post is made by a pseudonym of well-known philosophy professor Daniel C. Dennett, author of best sellers such as Darwin's Dangerous Idea and From Bacteria to Bach and Back. Evidence [here](#).

2.673. by Atla

For anyone with some semblance of intellect, the shape of the Earth is NOT flat, and the Hard problem IS an existing, coherent problem.

So stamping your feet is the best you can do. Well, two can play that game: I assert that to anyone with some semblance of intellect, the Hard problem is nothing more than an incoherent illusion. See how easy that is?

2.673. by Atla

It can't address what consciousness is, because that is currently unknown. That is the hard problem, get your facts straight.

We know what consciousness is. The Global Neuronal Workspace model tells us exactly what it is and how it comes about. Get your facts straight.

2.673. by Atla

That is not the mainstream consensus, you continue to repeat your ignorance.

It is the mainstream consensus, cupcake. If you were right and I were wrong, you would have no problem citing specific evidence in which consciousness played a special role in the measurement problem, and despite repeated requests, you can't.

2.673. by Atla

Here I wrote it down 3 times. You can also read that chapter I linked I'm getting tired of repeating myself.

You babbled incoherently and waved vaguely in various meaningless directions instead of explicitly spelling out how consciousness is involved with the measurement problem.

This is exactly what one should expect when someone who believes in non-scientific New Age nonsense has their backs to the wall.

CHAPTER 2.691.

~

Atla on  Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 5:08 PM

2.690. by Faustus5 (Dennett)

2.673. by Atla

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You babbled incoherently and waved vaguely in various meaningless directions instead of explicitly spelling out how consciousness is involved with the measurement problem.

This is exactly what one should expect when someone who believes in non-scientific New Age nonsense has their backs to the wall.

So this has gotten to a point where you say things like

absolutely nothing to do with consciousness in any sense of the term

consciousness played a special role

and then act like you said the exact same thing twice.

CHAPTER 2.692.

~

Gertie on  Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 9:38 PM

PC

When emergence happens, it happens for the same reason that reductionism can fail (but in reverse). If the function of the whole is defined mainly by its parts, then reductionism can work on the whole, and emergence probably will not occur when the parts are combined.

But if the function of the whole is (strongly) dependent on the interconnections between the parts, reductionism will not work, and emergence may occur: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This isn't surprising, and it isn't magic. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts because the function of the whole is dependent on the interconnections between the parts, and it therefore is more than the simple sum of its components. It is the sum of its parts and their interconnections. No magic.

The human brain is a great example of emergence. Its function is heavily (wholly?) dependent on the interconnection of its parts, to the extent that the parts themselves are almost irrelevant. So, although brains may seem a bit magical, they're not. They're just heavily connection-oriented, which gives rise to an emergent product.

Nobody thinks the way physical brains work is magic, we assume they conform with the scientific physicalist account of material stuff and processes/connections.


But what this physicalist account does not include, explain or predict is the emergence of experience.

If it did, there would be no issue. Like we accept H₂O molecules interacting in particular ways can result in solid ice or liquid water, these are novel properties resulting from understood, physical processes. All subject to the same physical laws, accounted for and predictable by physics. No magic required.

There is no such physicalist explanation for conscious experience. No-one knows what such an explanation might in principle be, or what to look for. That is why it is called The Hard Problem. And why simply assuming conscious experience is an emergent property of material processes/connections isn't justified.

CHAPTER 2.693.

~

Pattern-chaser on  Monday, November 23, 2020 at 1:38 PM



2.692. by Gertie

There is no such physicalist explanation for conscious experience. No-one knows what such an explanation might in principle be, or what to look for. That is why it is called The Hard Problem. And why simply assuming conscious experience is an emergent property of material processes/connections isn't justified.

We all have an informal understanding of consciousness, which is adequate for simple and general everyday purposes. But, if we wish to discuss it in a philosophy forum like this one, it quickly becomes clear that we can't even define what we mean by it, much less discuss its nature. Consciousness is a fascinating thing to think about, but we're not yet ready to discuss it formally; we're farther back in the process than that. We can muse, but that's about all we can do at this

stage. And musing doesn't go down well with scientists, who require that everything is formal and well-defined before discussion can commence.

For these reasons, I can't see the point in discussing consciousness here. There is no room or tolerance here for musing, sadly.

CHAPTER 2.694.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:08 PM



2.689. by Atla

...discussing emergence in the context of the Hard problem of consciousness.

The problem of why probability functions collapse in response to being observed by a conscious entity is a fascinating one. But the one that appeals to me, personally, is the modified double-slit experiment. I expect you're aware of it.

In the modified experiment, photons are passed through the experimental apparatus *one at a time*. Each *individual* photon apparently passes through both slits at the same time, and then interferes with itself, producing the characteristic interference pattern in the detectors. That one I find delightful! And perplexing too....

CHAPTER 2.695.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:32 PM

2.694. by Pattern-chaser

2.689. by Atla

...discussing emergence in the context of the Hard problem of consciousness.

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Wavefunction collapse is probably

- unrelated to the Hard problem of consciousness
- unrelated to emergence

- unrelated to 'conscious entities', that's quantum woo
(and you said you're not discussing consciousness)

CHAPTER 2.696.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:41 PM



2.694. by Pattern-chaser

The problem of why probability functions collapse in response to being observed by a conscious entity is a fascinating one. But the one that appeals to me, personally, is the modified double-slit experiment. I expect you're aware of it.

In the modified experiment, photons are passed through the experimental apparatus one at a time. Each individual photon apparently passes through both slits at the same time, and then interferes with itself, producing the characteristic interference pattern in the detectors. That one I find delightful! And perplexing too....

2.695. by Atla

Wavefunction collapse is probably unrelated to the Hard problem of consciousness

...and yet it takes (as far as we know or understand) a conscious observer to cause the collapse. 🤔🤔🤔

CHAPTER 2.697.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:44 PM



2.695. by Atla

2.694. by Pattern-chaser

The problem of why probability functions collapse in response to being observed by a conscious entity is a fascinating one. But the one that appeals to me, personally, is the modified double-slit experiment. I expect you're aware of it.

In the modified experiment, photons are passed through the experimental apparatus one at a time. Each individual photon apparently passes through both slits at the same time, and then interferes with itself, producing the characteristic interference pattern in the detectors. That one I find delightful! And perplexing too....

Wavefunction collapse is probably

- unrelated to the Hard problem of consciousness*
- unrelated to emergence*
- unrelated to 'conscious entities', that's quantum woo (and you said you're not discussing consciousness)*

No comment on individual photons apparently interfering with themselves, or of one photon apparently passing through two slits at the same time? Oh, well. Perhaps it's just me. 😊

CHAPTER 2.698.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:56 PM

2.696. by Pattern-chaser

...and yet it takes (as far as we know or understand) a conscious observer to cause the collapse. 🤔🤔🤔

That is not true.

CHAPTER 2.699.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 4:57 PM

2.697. by Pattern-chaser

No comment on individual photons apparently interfering with themselves, or of one photon apparently passing through two slits at the same time? Oh, well. Perhaps it's just me. 😊

If we can't know in principle, which slit it goes through, then it goes through both, interfering with itself.

CHAPTER 2.700.

~

Atla on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 5:29 PM

Ok fine. Here's a neat example I just came up with: in 2020 we perform a double slit experiment, where a detector detects which slit the photons went through. But we don't look at the results of the experiment, instead we put the information captured by the detector on a rocket, and send it to the Andromeda galaxy. There are no duplicates of this information in the universe. In 2030 the rocket arrives in the Andromeda galaxy, where an alien civilization captures it. Two options:

1. The aliens don't irrecoverably destroy the information carried by the rocket. After that, we look at the results of the experiment, and we find that 10 years ago, the photons went through one slit or the other, 'in one piece'.
2. The aliens irrecoverably destroy the information carried by the rocket. After that, we look at the result of the experiment, and we find that 10 years ago, the photons went through both slits at the same time, and interfered with themselves.

CHAPTER 2.701.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 6:04 PM



2.700. by Atla

Ok fine. Here's a neat example I just came up with: in 2020 we perform a double slit experiment, where a detector detects which slit the photons went through. But we don't look at the results of the experiment, instead we put the information captured by the detector on a rocket, and send it to the Andromeda galaxy. There are no duplicates of this information in the universe. In 2030 the rocket arrives in the Andromeda galaxy, where an alien civilization captures it. Two options:

- 1. The aliens don't irrecoverably destroy the information carried by the rocket. After that, we look at the results of the experiment, and we find that 10 years ago, the photons went through one slit or the other, 'in one piece'.*
- 2. The aliens irrecoverably destroy the information carried by the rocket. After that, we look at the result of the experiment, and we find that 10 years ago, the photons went through both slits at the same time, and interfered with themselves.*

I think investigation along these lines has been done, but I could be wrong.

CHAPTER 2.702.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 6:06 PM



2.698. by Atla

2.696. by Pattern-chaser

...and yet it takes (as far as we know or understand) a conscious observer to cause the collapse. 🤔🤔



That is not true.

No? What do you know that I don't, or have missed?

CHAPTER 2.703.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 4:13 PM

2.702. by Pattern-chaser

2.698. by Atla

That is not true.

No? What do you know that I don't, or have missed?

Well that's just one of the big questions isn't it, what causes 'collapse'. But there seems to be no reason to think that 'individual consciousness' and 'quantum observer' are identical. I've keep saying: I don't think consciousness plays a special role in any of this, and everyone just ignores what I'm saying. There seems to be some overlapping going on however.

It could for example be so, that some part(s) of some or most people's individual consciousness are already in 'collapsed' states to begin with, or they share some 'collective collapsed island'. I wouldn't say all people, because some small human embryos may just as well be in superpositions from my perspective.

Some parts of my mind are probably 'collapsed', some parts of it might not be. Parts of the monitor in front of me is probably also collapsed, because I'm making it so.

And as I said, 'collapse' probably isn't related to consciousness in the Hard problem sense whatsoever. That's probably just taking two things that Western thought deeply misunderstands, and equating them.

It seems to be because of this overlapping, that there seems to this perfect connection between our mental content and the outside world, how the universe is always 'manifested' without the available possibilities, in accordance with what you are thinking and doing and knowing and all that. So imo that's a pretty strong direct evidence that existence is nondual. But it's also evidence that there seems to be a hidden quantum structure to the universe, hiding in plain sight, that we

are only now beginning to understand.

Or maybe something entirely different is going on, no one really knows.

Another quirk of this is that you can stop, slow down or speed up the time evolution for some small parts of the universe, if you so choose. This ability to genuinely mess with time is one of the most mindblowing things imo. (called quantum zeno effect)

CHAPTER 2.704.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 4:15 PM

*how the universe is always 'manifested' within the available possibilities

CHAPTER 2.705.

~

Atla on 🕒 Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 4:39 PM

On a side note, if we accept that some parts of our minds are for some reason (which reason is the biggest mystery here imo) already 'collapsed', and we might be able to automatically extend this collapse into the outside world, then funny questions start to pop up.

For example: if you stare at someone else, does that mess with their head, and makes them feel 'watched'? If you suddenly stare at a clock, does it seem to stop for a short while, or does it actually do that, from your perspective? Can you slightly influence the universe using attention and prayer etc. all these sorts of things.

CHAPTER 2.706.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 11:15 PM



2.705. by Atla

On a side note, if we accept that some parts of our minds are for some reason (which reason is the biggest mystery here imo) already 'collapsed', and we might be able to automatically extend this collapse into the outside world, then funny questions start to pop up.

For example: if you stare at someone else, does that mess with their head, and makes them feel 'watched'? If you suddenly stare at a clock, does it seem to stop for a short while, or does it actually do that, from your perspective? Can you slightly influence the universe using attention and prayer etc. all these sorts of things.

1) You can't stop a clock with your mind.

2) When you stare, this is seen as a threat as it has been since before the Cambrian explosion. A stare usually means something is considering you as food. Species that do not see staring as a potential threat have not been as successful as those that have, and so modern species tend to have this trait.

CHAPTER 2.707.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 11:16 PM



2.703. by Atla

2.702. by Pattern-chaser

No? What do you know that I don't, or have missed?

Well that's just one of the big questions isn't it, what causes 'collapse'. But there seems to be no reason to think that 'individual consciousness' and 'quantum observer' are identical. I've keep saying: I don't think consciousness plays a special role in any of this, and everyone just ignores what I'm saying. There seems to be some overlapping going on however.

It could for example be so, that some part(s) of some or most people's individual consciousness are already in 'collapsed' states to begin with, or they share some 'collective collapsed island'. I wouldn't say all people, because some small human embryos may just as well be in superpositions from my perspective.

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It seems to be because of this overlapping, that there seems to this perfect connection between our mental content and the outside world, how the universe is always 'manifested' without the available possibilities, in accordance with what you are thinking and doing and knowing and all that. So imo that's a pretty strong direct evidence that existence is nondual. But it's also evidence that there seems to be a hidden quantum structure to the universe, hiding in plain sight, that we are only now beginning to understand.

Or maybe something entirely different is going on, no one really knows.

Another quirk of this is that you can stop, slow down or speed up the time evolution for some small parts of the universe, if you so choose. This ability to genuinely mess with time is one of the most mindblowing things imo. (called quantum zeno effect)

It's all part of your imagination.
You are kidding yourself

CHAPTER 2.708.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 5:24 AM

2.706. by Sculptor1

1) *You can't stop a clock with your mind.*

2) *When you stare, this is seen as a threat as it has been since before the Cambrian explosion. A stare usually means something is considering you as food. Species that do not see staring as a potential threat have not been as successful as those that have, and so modern species tend to have this trait.*

*It's all part of your imagination.
You are kidding yourself*

One thing we can know for sure though is that your opinions don't matter in the slightest

CHAPTER 2.709.

~

Sculptor1 on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 10:25 AM



2.708. by Atla

2.706. by Sculptor1

1) *You can't stop a clock with your mind.*

2) *When you stare, this is seen as a threat as it has been since before the Cambrian explosion. A stare usually means something is considering you as food. Species that do not see staring as a potential threat have not been as successful as those that have, and so modern species tend to have this trait.*

*It's all part of your imagination.
You are kidding yourself*

One thing we can know for sure though is that your opinions don't matter in the slightest

Is that the "Royal WE"?

CHAPTER 2.710.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 2:31 PM

2.703. by Atla

I've keep saying: I don't think consciousness plays a special role in any of this, and everyone just ignores what I'm saying.



Perhaps that's because the generally-accepted understanding is that consciousness does seem to play a role in this; it appears that the only observers that can collapse a quantum probability function are conscious.

CHAPTER 2.711.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 2:34 PM

2.703. by Atla

It could for example be so, that some part(s) of some or most people's individual consciousness are already in 'collapsed' states to begin with, or they share some 'collective collapsed island'.

Some parts of my mind are probably 'collapsed', some parts of it might not be. Parts of the monitor in front of me is probably also collapsed, because I'm making it so.



The collapse of a probability function is not a real physical "collapse". No part of your mind is/has collapsed, or at least not as a result of a quantum mechanical situation. The same applies to your monitor, I think.

CHAPTER 2.712.

~

Pattern-chaser on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 2:38 PM

2.708. by Atla

One thing we can know for sure though is that your opinions don't matter in the slightest

When one is lacking an argument, one can always fall back on insults. All the philosophers here are convinced and impressed by insults, not arguments. Everyone knows that, right?



CHAPTER 2.713.

~

Atla on 🕒 Monday, November 30, 2020 at 3:36 PM

2.712. by Pattern-chaser

Perhaps that's because the generally-accepted understanding is that consciousness does seem to play a role in this; it appears that the only observers that can collapse a quantum probability function are conscious.

Funnily enough a few comments back, Faustus claimed the exact opposite of your claim, with the same conviction.

No, it's NOT the generally-accepted understanding at all that only conscious observers can collapse wave functions. That's now considered a fringe interpretation.

The collapse of a probability function is not a real physical "collapse". No part of your mind is/has collapsed, or at least not as a result of a quantum mechanical situation. The same applies to your monitor, I think.

Collapsed = not in superposition, taking single eigenstates. Of course some parts of the known world are like that.

When one is lacking an argument, one can always fall back on insults. All the philosophers here are convinced and impressed by insults, not arguments. Everyone knows that, right?

If you or Scupltor insult me, I will insult you back. If you ask me, you two belong on a philosophy forum even less than I do.

CHAPTER 2.714.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 10:24 AM

I think one of the longstanding problems with discussion about the concept of "wavefunction collapse" in general discussions about quantum mechanics is that, when understood in its everyday sense, the word "collapse" suggests something physical happening, like a cliff falling into the sea or whatever. In the context of QM, what it means, essentially, is that a mathematical equation has been solved for a particular case. One could point out that solving a mathematical equation is a physical event involving such physical objects as pencils, paper and brains, but that isn't the physical event that most people probably think of when they hear the word "collapse".

The wavefunction is an equation. It contains all of the potentially measurable information about a physical system. "Wavefunction collapse" involves applying an operator to the wavefunction, for a particular eigenfunction, to get an eigenvalue. All of these things, "wavefunction", "equation", "operator", "eigenfunction" and "eigenvalue" are mathematical concepts, just like, say, the multiplication operator is a mathematical concept.

CHAPTER 2.715.

~

Atla on 🕒 Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 2:55 PM

2.714. by Steve3007

I think one of the longstanding problems with discussion about the concept of "wavefunction collapse" in general discussions about quantum mechanics is that, when understood in its everyday sense, the word "collapse" suggests something physical happening, like a cliff falling into the sea or whatever. In the context of QM, what it means, essentially, is that a mathematical equation has been solved for a particular case. One could point out that solving a mathematical equation is a physical event involving such physical objects as pencils, paper and brains, but that isn't the physical event that most people probably think of when they hear the word "collapse".

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'Wavefunction', 'collapsed state' etc. also describe something about the natural world, even if they are to be understood as just metaphors. You seem to be saying essentially that QM, and therefore physics in general, say nothing about the natural world. But then nothing says anything about the natural world, what's the point of this non-approach?

CHAPTER 2.716.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 10:31 AM

Atla wrote: 'Wavefunction', 'collapsed state' etc. also describe something about the natural world, even if they are to be understood as just metaphors

Yes, all of the mathematics used in physics purports to describe properties of the natural world, tested by observation.

You seem to be saying essentially that QM, and therefore physics in general, say nothing about the natural world.

I said "The wavefunction is an equation. It contains all of the potentially measurable information **about a physical system.**" I regard the term "physical system" as meaning "a system in the natural world".

CHAPTER 2.717.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 4:11 PM

2.716. by Steve3007

Atla wrote: 'Wavefunction', 'collapsed state' etc. also describe something about the natural world, even if they are to be understood as just metaphors

Yes, all of the mathematics used in physics purports to describe properties of the natural world, tested by observation.

You seem to be saying essentially that QM, and therefore physics in general, say nothing about the natural world.

I said "The wavefunction is an equation. It contains all of the potentially measurable information about a physical system." I regard the term "physical system" as meaning "a system in the natural world".

Yes you seem to be talking about the mathematics of physical systems, while avoiding saying anything about the natural world directly (avoid ontology).

CHAPTER 2.718.

~

Steve3007 on 🕒 Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 5:24 PM

Atla wrote: Yes you seem to be talking about the mathematics of physical systems, while avoiding saying anything about the natural world directly (avoid ontology).

My post was about some problems with discussion about the concept of "wavefunction collapse" and the way that the word "collapse" sometimes appears to me to be misunderstood.

In your view, does not mentioning other topics in that post constitute avoiding those topics?

CHAPTER 2.719.

~

Atla on 🕒 Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 6:26 PM

2.718. by Steve3007

Atla wrote: Yes you seem to be talking about the mathematics of physical systems, while avoiding saying anything about the natural world directly (avoid ontology).

My post was about some problems with discussion about the concept of "wavefunction collapse" and the way that the word "collapse" sometimes appears to me to be misunderstood.


In your view, does not mentioning other topics in that post constitute avoiding those topics?

I mean, things like "superposition" vs. "collapsed state" may literally, physically mean that: seen from our perspective, something is in a jumble, mix of all possible states at once vs. it is in one

certain state, it is one certain way. "Collapse" may be more than just solving a mathematical equation, it may literally, physically mean that such a jumble is forced to take a certain state.

CHAPTER 2.720.

~

Leontiskos on  Sunday, January 2, 2022 at 3:52 AM




1.202. by  GE Morton

Serious philosophy, like science, is at bottom pragmatic --- it aims to improve our understanding of ourselves and the universe in which we find ourselves, so that we can better deal with the challenges it throws at us and make our stay in it more enjoyable. Whereas science aims to uncover and characterize features of the natural world and their relationships to one another, philosophers seek to clarify and strengthen the conceptual framework into which that information is fitted. Philosophical sidetracks which don't contribute to that aim attract little interest.

This strikes me as a very impoverished notion of philosophy. It takes a tiny subset of philosophy (positivist and analytic traditions) and pretends that there is nothing else. The majority of philosophy is about much more than merely augmenting our survival probability and quality. The ability to think clearly is a pre-requisite for philosophy, not philosophy itself.

CHAPTER 2.721.

~

Leontiskos on  Sunday, January 2, 2022 at 4:12 AM



1.3. by  Hereandnow

All that has ever been witnessed in the world is the human drama, if you will. That is, even as the driest, most dispassionate observer records more facts to support other facts, the actual event is within an "aesthetic" context, i.e., experience: there is the interest, the thrill of being a scientist, of discovery, of positive peer review and so forth. The actual pure science is an abstraction from this (see, btw, Dewey's Art as Experience for a nice take on this. NOT to agree with Dewey in all things). The whole from which this is abstracted is all there is, a world, and this world is in its essence, brimming with meaning, incalculable, intractable to the powers of the microscope. It is eternal, as all inquiry leads to openness, that is, you cannot pin down experience in propositional knowledge.

All this means that when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting "science" or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.


...Of course this is absolutely true and in my opinion should be obvious to any philosopher. The fact that there is so much resistance to this post is just more (unnecessary) proof that this forum is philosophically defunct.

Scientism aside, there is a recent strain in the Anglo philosophical tradition which labors under the assumption that philosophy is delimited to a particular scope or field. The failure of logical positivism harmed that school, but it still lives on in certain forms. I doubt that German or French philosophy forums would struggle so much with these basic points.

In Aristotelian terms biology is the study of being *qua* living, and physics is the study of being *qua* material motion, and mathematics it the study of being *qua* number, etc. But of course metaphysics, or first philosophy, is not delimited, and is thus precisely the study of being *qua* being. I wonder, though, what the *naysayers* would say is the properly limited domain of philosophy?

CHAPTER 2.722.

~

Hereandnow on  Monday, January 3, 2022 at 1:00 AM



Leontiskos wrote

In Aristotelian terms biology is the study of being qua living, and physics is the study of being qua material motion, and mathematics it the study of being qua number, etc. But of course metaphysics, or first philosophy, is not delimited, and is thus precisely the study of being qua being. I wonder, though, what the naysayers would say is the properly limited domain of philosophy?

Naysayers simply don't want to talk about it, and they don't read Continental philosophy, and by the time they even know it exists, save Kant, they have already spent their interests on analytic philosophy. Rorty was one of the few who knew both worlds.

Studying being qua being belongs in an existentialist's sandbox, culminating in the French post post moderns like Michel Henry, Jean luc Marion, Jean luc Nancy who follow Husserl. I like Levinas as well. If one is going to take Being seriously as a theme for discussion, then it has to go through Heidegger, and analytic philosophers have until recently not given him the time of day. For me, Being and Time is simply basic to all else. Phenomenology puts the gravitas back into philosophy.

CHAPTER 2.723.

~

Leontiskos on  Monday, January 3, 2022 at 2:10 AM



2.722. by [Hereandnow](#)

2.721. by [Leontiskos](#)

In Aristotelian terms biology is the study of being qua living, and physics is the study of being qua material motion, and mathematics it the study of being qua number, etc. But of course metaphysics, or first philosophy, is not delimited, and is thus precisely the study of being qua being. I wonder, though, what the naysayers would say is the properly limited domain of philosophy?

Naysayers simply don't want to talk about it, and they don't read Continental philosophy, and by the time they even know it exists, save Kant, they have already spent their interests on analytic philosophy. Rorty was one of the few who knew both worlds.

With respect to the secular realm I agree, but I come from the Catholic world and in the Catholic world the analogue to analytic philosophy is Scholasticism, which is much older and much more robust than analytic philosophy. Further, the roots of Scholasticism go back to Aristotle's logic and natural science. So when you bring in the Platonists, the Neo-Platonists, the Aristotelians, the Augustinians, the Thomists, etc., you have thinkers up and down the ages who "knew both worlds." Meister Eckhart is of special note since he was very influential on Heidegger. There are also many contemporary religious thinkers who either grappled with or embraced various forms of phenomenology (e.g. "[The Dangerous Alliances Between Catholicism and Phenomenology](#)").

The same could be said, to a lesser degree, for Eastern Orthodox Christianity, for their Greek-speaking world retained the influence of Aristotle (along with Plato) unabated, unlike the Latin West. Yet in the East the Aristotelian logic and curiosity was less present, and thus you get less of an "analytic" focus.

CHAPTER 2.724.

~

Atla on  Monday, January 3, 2022 at 1:43 PM

2.721. by [Leontiskos](#)

In Aristotelian terms biology is the study of being qua living, and physics is the study of being qua material motion, and mathematics it the study of being qua number, etc. But of course metaphysics, or first philosophy, is not delimited, and is thus precisely the study of being qua being. I wonder, though, what the naysayers would say is the properly limited domain of philosophy?

Hello, I'm a naysayer about phenomenology. Correct me if I'm wrong, it seems to me that phenomenologists confuse "being" with "being as a typical, neurotypical 45 years old Western male philosopher of above average intelligence".

Being is universal, it encompasses everything in every way, shape and form. Every kind of human mind, every kind of life, and the non-living world. Phenomenologists however seem to view being strictly through the mind, through the mental givens and happenings of the above mentioned type. Why is that such a big deal please?



Leontiskos on 🕒 Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 12:05 AM



2.724. by Atla

2.721. by Leontiskos

In Aristotelian terms biology is the study of being qua living, and physics is the study of being qua material motion, and mathematics it the study of being qua number, etc. But of course metaphysics, or first philosophy, is not delimited, and is thus precisely the study of being qua being. I wonder, though, what the naysayers would say is the properly limited domain of philosophy?

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I think that's just an effect of Heidegger, but he clearly distinguished between different kinds of "being". By "naysayers" I was referring to the OP rather than to phenomenology. It is quite possible to agree with the OP but disagree with phenomenology.



Atla on 🕒 Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 9:51 PM

2.725. by Leontiskos

I think that's just an effect of Heidegger, but he clearly distinguished between different kinds of "being". By "naysayers" I was referring to the OP rather than to phenomenology. It is quite possible to agree with the OP but disagree with phenomenology.

I thought the OP was already about phenomenology, maybe I misunderstood. Yes science is just abstracting from the world, and has no business telling us what the world "is", so far so good, no disagreement there. Granted, even though this is a pretty obvious insight, often scientists and science-followers already don't make it this far.

So instead we should take a step back, and take in the world as a whole as it is directly experienced, and THEN say what the world "is", right? Indeed this is the more fundamental approach, and it is also underpinning the scientific view. So this must be the real deal.

My issue is that no, ultimately this also isn't the real deal, as nothing is. The world has no such

"givenness", what we experience is mostly just the "givenness" of our own individual human mind. For example the world isn't brimming with meaning, our minds are, the qualia of meaning may objectively exist and it may be abundant in the human mind, yet that has no real implications for the rest of the world. Same goes for any other "givenness". So we still can't tell what the world "is", because it really isn't anything. We are fooling ourselves if we continue to believe that there really is a philosophical bedrock we can dig down to. And because of that, the hegemony of science isn't *that* absurd, we can treat the world any way we want.

CHAPTER 2.727.

~

Leontiskos on 🕒 Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 10:58 PM



2.726. by Atla

I thought the OP was already about phenomenology, maybe I misunderstood.

I suppose the first paragraph has a phenomenological color. I was thinking more of the second paragraph of the OP.

So instead we should take a step back, and take in the world as a whole as it is directly experienced, and THEN say what the world "is", right? Indeed this is the more fundamental approach, and it is also underpinning the scientific view. So this must be the real deal.

My issue is that no, ultimately this also isn't the real deal, as nothing is. The world has no such "givenness", what we experience is mostly just the "givenness" of our own individual human mind. For example the world isn't brimming with meaning, our minds are, the qualia of meaning may objectively exist and it may be abundant in the human mind, yet that has no real implications for the rest of the world. Same goes for any other "givenness". So we still can't tell what the world "is", because it really isn't anything. We are fooling ourselves if we continue to believe that there really is a philosophical bedrock we can dig down to. And because of that, the hegemony of science isn't that absurd, we can treat the world any way we want.

If you want to take an anti-realist skeptical view of the world, how then could this support the hegemony of science? It seems to me that the hegemony of science really is incompatible with such a skeptical view.

CHAPTER 2.728.

~

Atla on 🕒 Friday, January 7, 2022 at 4:44 AM


2.727. by Leontiskos

If you want to take an anti-realist skeptical view of the world, how then could this support the hegemony of science? It seems to me that the hegemony of science really is incompatible with such a skeptical view.

Isn't phenomenology also incompatible with anti-realist skepticism then, just less so? But you'll have to define what you mean by anti-realist skepticism, to be honest I've found both realism and anti-realism to be problematic, and also there seem to be like a dozen definitions for them.

CHAPTER 2.729.

~

Leontiskos on  Friday, January 7, 2022 at 6:10 AM



2.728. by Atla

2.727. by Leontiskos

If you want to take an anti-realist skeptical view of the world, how then could this support the hegemony of science? It seems to me that the hegemony of science really is incompatible with such a skeptical view.

Isn't phenomenology also incompatible with anti-realist skepticism then, just less so?

Yes, probably, but there are very many different phenomenological schools that seem to hold different degrees of realism.

But you'll have to define what you mean by anti-realist skepticism, to be honest I've found both realism and anti-realism to be problematic, and also there seem to be like a dozen definitions for them.

You seemed to be saying that we only really experience our own minds, not an external world, which is an anti-realist view. By 'skepticism' I mean that you take a skeptical stance towards the ability to truly know the external world, beyond the human mind.

CHAPTER 2.730.

~

Atla on  Friday, January 7, 2022 at 4:48 PM

2.729. by Leontiskos

You seemed to be saying that we only really experience our own minds, not an external world, which is an anti-realist view. By 'skepticism' I mean that you take a skeptical stance towards the ability to truly know the external world, beyond the human mind.

Yes human consciousness is probably representational, all we can experience are our own minds, and we infer an outside world from this experience. But we can never really tell what it's "actually like out there", or whether there is even an "out there".

If that's what you meant, then I don't see how this is incompatible with science, as this is pretty much the current scientific view. That there is a "model" of the world in our head, and that's what we experience. Few take naive realism seriously anymore.

CHAPTER 2.731.

~

Leontiskos on 🕒 Friday, January 7, 2022 at 9:57 PM



2.730. by Atla

2.729. by Leontiskos

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I suppose the simple answer is that science studies the world, not phenomena of the human mind. So if you don't admit a world beyond the confines of the mind, you can't do science.

CHAPTER 2.732.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 4:26 AM

2.731. by Leontiskos

2.730. by Atla

2.729. by Leontiskos

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I suppose the simple answer is that science studies the world, not phenomena of the human mind. So if you don't admit a world beyond the confines of the mind, you can't do science.

You can't really do anything if you don't *assume* a world beyond the confines of the mind. You can't even have concepts like beyond, confines and mind.

CHAPTER 2.733.

~

Sy Borg on 🕒 Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 4:56 AM



2.732. by Atla

2.731. by Leontiskos

2.730. by Atla

2.729. by Leontiskos

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I suppose the simple answer is that science studies the world, not phenomena of the human mind. So if you don't admit a world beyond the confines of the mind, you can't do science.

You can't really do anything if you don't assume a world beyond the confines of the mind. You can't even have concepts like beyond, confines and mind.

Agreed. While consciousness is the only truly certain truth in our lives, the contents of the mind are based on real phenomena, even if perceived with bias.

Rather than being surrounded by no world or one world, we appear to reside within many, many potential worlds, with each world rendered from the incomprehensible maelstrom of physical reality* by different sensory apparatus. In a sense, we do not live in the same world as ants or mice, for example, despite being embedded in the same physical schema.

From this perspective, idealism, phenomenology and modern science can work in tandem rather in opposition. Existentialist ideas too can be thought of in terms of cause and effect, antecedent and result, extending back in evolutionary history to the birth of the will with the first sense/response reflexes. Even religious texts can be seen as the ancients no doubt intended - metaphorically - without conflicting with modern science.

I see no reason (outside of history) why these disciplines need be in competition, other than the

pragmatic economic decisions to silo, rather than connect, different disciplines. So I see less of an absurd hegemony of science than shallow criticisms of ancient ideas by, admittedly, a fair proportion of science buffs. I put such secular hostility towards spiritual ideas down to resentment against the presumed and unearned authority of religions in the past, and their interference with policy-making today, the schisms widened by a rise in fundamentalism/Biblical literalism.

Of course, if you are talking about where the grant money goes, it should be said that some areas of science are not well patronised. Biologists, for example, frequently have to struggle for funding while nuclear physics, space exploration, weapons development, neuroscience and AI are far better supported. The "hegemony" is perhaps less science's per se, than certain tranches.

Interesting and informative discussion BTW. Thanks.

* Without filtering by the brain, reality would be perceived as blinding and deafening chaos.

CHAPTER 2.734.

~

Leontiskos on 🕒 Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 4:58 AM



2.732. by Atla

2.731. by Leontiskos

I suppose the simple answer is that science studies the world, not phenomena of the human mind. So if you don't admit a world beyond the confines of the mind, you can't do science.

You can't really do anything if you don't assume a world beyond the confines of the mind. You can't even have concepts like beyond, confines and mind.

I agree, but since you say above that "we can't tell what the world is because it really isn't anything," it seems that "[you] can't really do anything." That is, you are failing to make this crucial "assumption."

In any case, science studies the world, not phenomena of the mind. If you think we only have access to the phenomena of the human mind, and have no access to the external world, then you cannot do science. Whether you can do anything at all is beside my point.

CHAPTER 2.735.

~

Atla on 🕒 Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 5:37 AM

2.734. by Leontiskos

I agree, but since you say above that "we can't tell what the world is because it really isn't anything," it seems that "[you] can't really do anything." That is, you are failing to make this crucial "assumption."

I meant that the world isn't really "anything", there is no "isness", so ultimately we can treat the world any way we want. "Isness" is a way of thinking, and philosophy can move beyond it, it can go deeper than phenomenology.

Treating the world any way we want, of course also includes the option of "not doing anything", but what would be the point of that, should we lay down and die? Instead what we can do is agree on how to treat the world, which "isness" to buy into.

Science says that the "givenness" of the world "IS" matter, protons, electrons, energy etc., but that's ultimately just a treatment of the world.

Phenomenology says that no-no, the real "givenness" of the world is more fundamental, it "IS" being as such as such, meaning, value, sensation etc.


But ultimately that's also just a treatment of the world, so phenomenology and science aren't all that dissimilar in this sense, and the hegemony of science isn't all that absurd. Plus science attempts to look at the whole world, while phenomenology seems to misattribute human mental things to the world. I think it's important to make the assumption that human consciousness is representational, so the phenomena are just the phenomena of the representational human mind, as far as I know Kant didn't want to make this assumption, but he should have.

In any case, science studies the world, not phenomena of the mind. If you think we only have access to the phenomena of the human mind, and have no access to the external world, then you cannot do science. Whether you can do anything at all is beside my point.

I don't understand this argument, the phenomena of the mind seem to represent the outside world very accurately, unless someone has severe conditions such as schizophrenia. Technically everyone is limited to their own minds, and everyone is assuming a shared outside world, and this works.

CHAPTER 2.736.

~

Leontiskos on  Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 4:59 PM



2.735. by Atla

2.734. by Leontiskos

I agree, but since you say above that "we can't tell what the world is because it really isn't anything," it seems that "[you] can't really do anything." That is, you are failing to make this crucial "assumption."

I meant that the world isn't really "anything", there is no "isness", so ultimately we can treat the world any way we want. "Isness" is a way of thinking, and philosophy can move beyond it, it can go deeper than phenomenology.

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Let me offer a couple of points (there was a third but I lost my post and then forgot the third):

1. You seem to have moved from a rather strong anti-realism to a rather strong realism in the matter of a few posts. For example, above you claimed:

"The world has no such "givenness", what we experience is mostly just the "givenness" of our own individual human mind. For example the world isn't brimming with meaning, our minds are, the qualia of meaning may objectively exist and it may be abundant in the human mind, yet that has no real implications for the rest of the world."

This is much different from what you say now. You went from claiming that the phenomena of the mind "has no real implications for the rest of the world" to saying that "the phenomena of the mind seem to represent the outside world very accurately." Of course insofar as you abandon and move away from that earlier anti-realism, you will be able to undertake the sort of inquiry that presupposes some form of realism, e.g. science.

2. Science does not say that the givenness of the world is matter, protons, etc. Science rather says that the givenness of the world *includes* matter, protons, etc. If you are an anti-realist with respect to matter you can't do science, because science really does presuppose matter. It could be called a "treatment" of the world, but it is also an interpretation of the world that the scientist must in

reality affirm. The hegemony of science is absurd because science has no basis for excluding things outside of its domain of inquiry.


In any case, science studies the world, not phenomena of the mind. If you think we only have access to the phenomena of the human mind, and have no access to the external world, then you cannot do science. Whether you can do anything at all is beside my point.

I don't understand this argument, the phenomena of the mind seem to represent the outside world very accurately, unless someone has severe conditions such as schizophrenia. Technically everyone is limited to their own minds, and everyone is assuming a shared outside world, and this works.

As far as I am concerned, if you think you can reliably and accurately infer an outside reality from the phenomena you experience, then you are committed to some form of indirect or mediated realism, which is the most common kind. Science surely does presuppose such a thing.

CHAPTER 2.737.

~

Sculptor1 on  Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 5:21 PM



1.72. by  Hereandnow

Sculptor1 wrote

Where is your hegemony of science please?

My complaint is that no science can provide an explanatory basis for things in general, but people think like this all the time. They think the world is what science says it is and beyond this, there is only what the pending "paradigmatic scientific revolutions" will eventually yield.

Please cite!

Your comments are hopelessly subjective and generalised.

This kind of thinking doesn't even provide the proper starting place for a true explanatory basis of the world.

Each and every discipline claims to have explanatory value and all disciplines provide explanations within the framework and using the parameters of their discipline.

This is true of everything from religion to astronomy. But I have to tell you that the only place I have witnessed doubt about the value of that explanation is from scientists, many of whom know that what they are doing is descriptive. And no one does a better job of making accurate and valid descriptions of the world, since it is science that makes these things their aim.

But NO where do I see science in any form of hegemony. Maybe you live on another planet.

One has to ignore what science says, that is, suspend this (epoche) and look to what science presupposes in order to get to a foundation. And what one finds in this approach is that all things properly analyzed presuppose something they are not; they are endlessly deferential. I say cat and you ask me what this is, and I have other ideas in the waiting, and for those I have other ideas, and this never stops. foundations all are deferential, so there are no foundations. Science's world of empirical concepts are the same.

This does not make any sense. "Once has to..." why??

The only true foundation is the endless deferential nature of all knowledge claims, and instead of substance or materiality, we have no archimedean point to "leverage" meaning.

Interestingly poetic, but useless.

The advantage this brings to the understanding is it undoes this blind confidence in scientific thinking at the foundational level (certainly not regarding how to send people to Mars or make a better cell phone). The upshot is the encouragement of an all-inclusiveness of ontological priorities: there is no longer any privilege given to traditional ontologies, keeping in mind that privileging of this kind forces interpretations of our affairs to be "of" or "issue from" the privileged idea. The mysteries and the affectivity and all the things that human experience IS, are restored to a nonreductive place.

Claims without basis. Solutions without problems.

It seems to me that you are getting to show your hand here. My thought is that you resent science for its undoubted success, but would rather the world constructed differently and so you invent claims about science holding hegemony, which sadly it does not.

The appearance of science and its undoubted successes in the face of more wishy-washy disciplines such as the humanities and soft sciences may look like hegemony but it's just because science is effective whilst history and religion are simply not useful.

CHAPTER 2.738.

~

Atla on  Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 5:40 PM

2.736. by Leontiskos

Let me offer a couple of points (there was a third but I lost my post and then forgot the third):

1. You seem to have moved from a rather strong anti-realism to a rather strong realism in the matter of a few posts. For example, above you claimed:

"The world has no such "givenness", what we experience is mostly just the "givenness" of our own individual human mind. For example the world isn't brimming with meaning, our minds are, the qualia of meaning may objectively exist and it may be abundant in the human mind, yet that has no real implications for the rest of the world."

This is much different from what you say now. You went from claiming that the phenomena of the mind "has no real implications for the rest of the world" to saying that "the phenomena of the mind seem to represent the outside world very accurately." Of course insofar as you abandon and move away from that earlier anti-realism, you will be able to undertake the sort of inquiry that presupposes some form of realism, e.g. science.

I'd say realism vs anti-realism is a crude dichotomy that's not even wrong, I don't think you can put me in either of those categories. Why people still take it seriously I don't know.

In the first quote I was criticizing how phenomenology seems to misattribute human mental things

to the rest of the world. (And on a deeper level, all meta-giveness/isness is illusory anyway, doesn't matter whether phenomenology or science does it.)

In the second quote I was talking about representation. I don't understand your argument, we don't know what the world is out there actually like because we are limited to our consciousness, but we can test the contents of our consciousness for example by walking into a wall that's appearing in our consciousness, and see what happens. That's how ALL science is done too, even if those scientists mistakenly believe in a strong realism.

2. Science does not say that the givenness of the world is matter, protons, etc. Science rather says that the givenness of the world includes matter, protons, etc. If you are an anti-realist with respect to matter you can't do science, because science really does presuppose matter. It could be called a "treatment" of the world, but it is also an interpretation of the world that the scientist must in reality affirm. The hegemony of science is absurd because science has no basis for excluding things outside of its domain of inquiry.


Of course science works all the same without the idea of matter, after we've reinterpreted everything accordingly. It just becomes more difficult to communicate without a well-established empty concept such as matter.

As far as I am concerned, if you think you can reliably and accurately infer an outside reality from the phenomena you experience, then you are committed to some form of indirect or mediated realism, which is the most common kind. Science surely does presuppose such a thing.

Again, it doesn't have to be "realism", but yes human consciousness is representational, that's more like a fact not just a commitment.

CHAPTER 2.739.

~

Leontiskos on  Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 6:51 PM

I am going to go ahead and leave off here, letting my last post stand. Thanks for the conversation.



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GMO Debate

A critical perspective on eugenics

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