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## Executive Summary

If there is a singularly succinct executive summary of my theory of mind, it would be this: our minds and consciousness are the 'being' of the brain. Western philosophy has grappled for millennia with two virtually unrelated domains of inquiry: ontology and consciousness. I say they are one, and only seem like two because of the very different approaches taken towards them. We are fortunate to have Heidegger bringing us back to basics with respect to ontology. The question is put back on the table - what is being? - and my theory is a stab at an answer.

The scandal, as Kant put it, of philosophy's attitude towards the authenticity of the outer world is a direct consequence of two incorrigible, but natural, assumptions: 1) that what we see of objects in the world is a conglomeration of appearances - that is, properties, a thing's outward expressions - behind which is, or covering up, 2) the object's inner being, the thing-in-itself. We *have* to assume the object has being - that it should not seem irreconcilably paradoxical (how then would it appear?). But that being *doesn't* appear is what has led some towards a more skeptical view of the reality of the world as it shows up for us.

Heidegger, in agreement with Kant, in agreement with myself, regarded this as scandalous. His solution: the being of an object *just is* the conglomeration of its appearances - that is its being *to us* in any case. I don't wish to deny this at all, but I do want, at the same time, to save a place for the "hidden" being of things. The outward manifestations of things surely have their own being, and not something different from the appearances themselves, but the inner "noumenon" of a thing also has being, and *is* mysterious from the point of view of a subject who can only behold its outward manifestations. It is mysterious, that is, except in the case when that object is the human brain. In the latter case, the brain-in-itself just is its own consciousness and mind.

I thus equate consciousness and mind with being.

This must be qualified though:

First, being is not Being. The being of the brain is a *particular* being, and the being of this or that neuro-chemical event is even more particular. In order to "be", such particular beings must exist in particular distinguishable forms: thus we get qualia (and here I consider *any* state of mind "qualia" - thought, emotion, intending, wanting). Yet qualia are never experienced as "mental" - not *as such* anyway, except perhaps in our philosophical abstractions. One doesn't look at the blue of the sky and ask "I wonder what color the sky *really* is behind my visual experience of it?" Normally, one takes one's experiences of the world for realities unto themselves. What else but being could this be true for?

Second, being is never fixed. The brain is always doing something, always changing. Even at the level of elementary particles, there are always interactions and mutual influences. Thus, we get that qualia *flow*, that they give way from one qualitative form (or "feel") to another.

Third, being is not an object. Some of the greatest thinkers in the field agree that consciousness and mind are best understood as information. Being is essentially information (I use the word "meaning"). What follows is that the flow of qualia alluded to above is not really a mechanical process - it is not given to "cause and effect" description - I call it a "semantic" process. Syllogisms, a form of thought processing, are best brought in to clarify this point. That Socrates is mortal is not *caused* by the premises: Socrates is a man, and Socrates is mortal - not *mechanically*. It is *entailed* by them.

Generally, anywhere in the world where there is being, there is also consciousness and mind - but this is not to be taken as though non-human objects can "think" or "feel angry" or "see red, yellow, and blue". Qualia are, well, qualities. But we ought to do away with any assumptions, if held, about such qualities being *limited*. No, we will never be able to experience colors beyond the standard spectrum, nor will we ever experience sensations other than the five we have, nor can we know what it's like to be a bat, but these limitations only mark the boundaries of *human* qualia and *human* understanding. Qualia, or mind, in *general* ought to be conceptualized as limitless. What I propose in my theory is that whatever the qualia some physical system experience, though utterly unimaginable to us, they are of the necessary and sufficient character that they serve

as the system's "reasons" for behaving the way it does. Pain is a quality of experience, but it is also our *reason* for jumping up and down and yelling "Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!" It is not the *cause* of our actions - that can be explained by the physically appearing features of the brain - it is the justification. And in general, being is the final justification for everything.

In a sense, then, what I offer with my theory is a reversal of physicalism - a turning of it on its head - for consciousness and mind are not to be explained in terms of the brain - they are not "produced" by it - rather, it is the brain which is to be explained in terms of consciousness and mind. And what else but the brain's own being, if it is indeed what our consciousness and mind are, could the brain be reduced to? How are the outward appearances of brains - when inspected in the laboratory, under a microscope - to be translated in terms of consciousness and mind? If the reader hasn't an answer to this already, it will become obvious that it is in terms of qualia. If qualia are the basic building blocks of consciousness and mind, then they are also the building blocks of all our empirical (or sensual) experiences. The physical appearances of the brain - of anything - are sensory representations of its being.

If the being of the brain truly is information, then it can be communicated. It can "entail", as premises to a conclusion, further information. The qualia that make up one mind can, through means sometimes unbeknownst to us, be communicated and translated into different sets of qualia. This is what happens in situations like neurosurgery. What the neurosurgeon is looking at essentially is the system of qualia that make up the patient's mind, only that they have been communicated and translated into an all together different character - namely, physical (or sensory) representations - and this is what the mind of the neurosurgeon interfaces with.

This is nicely represented by the physical account of how this process is possible. Consider it: with open cranium, the patient's brain is struck by light. Some of this light is reflected off and enters the neurosurgeon's eye. It is then transduced in the retina to electric signals. These signals propagate up the optic nerve, jumping across a series of synaptic junctions whereupon the signal is transduced to chemical and then again to electrical form, and finally it enters the visual cortex where seeing occurs. If I am right, and all physicality can be understood in terms of a representation of the metamorphosis of being-as-information, then so too can this process. From the point of light reflecting off the patient's brain to that of the signals entering the neurosurgeon's cortex, what is really going on is the communication and translation of information. It begins as a state of qualia in the patient's mind and end as a different state of qualia in the neurosurgeon's - and it is qualia all the way through.

Yet this in no way defuncts science or physical realism. As I said above, not only are qualia real - that is, as the outer things they naturally appear to be - but as being, they could be nothing else. Our subjective worlds, though in a sense correctly understood as a system of qualia, are *real* worlds - really physical and external. Science is not *degraded* to the study of merely subjective appearances of what is only *assumed* to be physical - it can maintain its lofty status, its connection to the real - but, I propose, the mental is to be brought along with it. The mind is to be *projected* out into the world. What happens to the rest of Being (all the non-self that allegedly exists outside the mind) is that it gets pushed into the "great beyond" - a transcendental landscape that looms over the physical universe as humanly experienced and continues to function as the justifications for all that occurs therein. Nothing of this should ever clash with science - it is only meant to compliment it and supply a welcome - and much sought after - spiritual extension to reality.

If there is one quandary that lingers after all is said and done, it is why we - that is, why *this* particular being, this instance of consciousness and mind - feels so isolated from the rest. If the above is all true, then any particular being is never really separated off from the rest of Being. Why do we feel as though *we* are? In short, we only think we are. We *do* experience both ourselves and the rest of Being together - but unconsciously. The culprit here is thought - in particular, knowledge: we can only know about those experiences we have insofar as they stimulate the right centers in the brain - the "knowing" parts. We must be able to think "I am experiencing X" and believe it. A tree falling in another part of the world far removed from us may indeed "feel" something, but the physical effects of this event will never elicit the necessary brain responses for knowing about it - we will never think "I experience X" if X is the tree's experience, not in anyway that we are so overcome with conviction, the way we would (say) over the experience of pain. Consequently, we are taken in by an illusion: we're not *really* isolated subjects - there is a continuum linking us together with the rest of the universe - we just don't know it.

An executive summary such as this hardly does my theory justice. It is expanded in all its necessary detail in two papers: [The Basic Theory of Mind and Matter](#), and [The Advanced Theory of Mind and Matter](#). The Basic Theory sticks to mere descriptions and definitions. It defines "experience" (or qualia) and describes the relation between mind and brain in correlative terms only. The Advanced Theory ventures beyond definitions and correlative descriptions and steps into causal notions. It ultimately aims at a monist account of mind and matter, and generalizes mind to all physicality. Prior to reading these papers, however, the reader may want to cover the preparatory materials (i.e. the necessary brain sciences and philosophy background) made available in [Preliminary Concepts](#). After the core of the website (the Basic and Advanced Theories) has been understood,

the reader may decide to delve into other papers. [The Inconceivability of Consciousness](#) is a paper that addresses the issues that some philosophers have raised over what they consider a hurdle to any intelligible theory of consciousness: that it is essentially inconceivable. [Reality and Perception](#) is a paper that addresses a variety of pseudo-paradoxes that might appear to come out of my theory, and suggests a new "subjectivist language" as the best approach to resolving them. [Determinism and Free-Will](#) and [The Universe and "God"](#) touch on some of the more sophisticated and "deep" implications of my theory, some of which require an understanding of quantum mechanics. I have prepared a brief summary of quantum theory in the paper [Quantum Mechanics](#) which should be read, if the reader is not up to specs on the subject, before the former two papers. *Determinism and Free-Will* covers a small handful of approaches to fitting free-will into a theory as deterministic as mine at first seems. *The Universe and "God"* takes a look at the theory from a theistic point of view - indeed, if Being is to be equated with consciousness and mind, or some form thereof, then the theory could be the grounds for many-a-theological interpretation. Finally, in [Practical Applications](#), I consider in what ways the principles of the theory can be applied in a similar vein as science and physicalism towards technology.

If all this strikes the reader as daunting, I fear I have attempted to force him/her to chew, in a single bite, more than a whole mouthful. Alas, what else can I do in an executive summary? But I don't want the reader to feel overwhelmed. I would like him/her to feel welcome. I welcome you to explore the idea I wish to get across at a much slower and more comfortable pace. These papers may be long and plentiful, but I promise you they won't disappoint. I feel I have something truly novel and intelligent to say, and to say the least I think you'll find it interesting.

Some catch phrases:

Consciousness is the being of the brain.

Mind is the brain-in-itself.

Physicality is a sensory representation of a greater mental universe.

The true nature of reality is semantic.

An economization of philosophical disciplines is in order: the study of consciousness and the study of ontology are the same.

If the brain is the cause of behavior, the mind is the reason.

Mind is a justifying power.

There is not a divide between phenomena and noumena, but one between phenomena and more phenomena.

There is no object that isn't subject.

It is like something to be.

Read: [Preliminary Concepts](#).

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