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"To me it is evident for the reasons you allow of, that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, there must be some other mind wherein they exist. As sure, therefore, as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite, omnipresent Spirit who contains and supports it."

- George Berkeley (1685-1753)

Introduction

Hello, and welcome to my website. Here I present my philosophies of mind and consciousness. My name is Gibran Shah. The ideal audience for this website is one with an interest in philosophy of mind, and whose members are stimulated by fresh ideas that reach just a little outside the box. If this is you, read on (if it isn't, read on anyway).

Although I can't explain in a clear way what exactly my philosophies are in this introduction (as they require several papers to be expressed in full), I will describe the problems they are meant to solve. This entire website centers on a core theory of the relation between mind and matter, and layered overtop this core are extended theories, ideas, and interesting implications. What do I mean by the relation between mind and matter? This is a very popular topic in philosophical circles. It has been ever since Descartes introduced his Cartesian split, the idea that mind and body are two distinct entities. The philosophical conundrum is how one interacts with the other, and also how one creates the other (typically, we assume it is the brain which creates the mind). Why should a simple resolution to this conundrum be so elusive? It comes down to the very substance of mind and matter. They are so distinct in their very essence that comparison between the two is nearly impossible. It seems so unfathomable, therefore, that one could arise from the other. How does something physical, like the brain, create something so non-physical, like consciousness? And how are we to conceive of the manner in which they interact? It's easy to conceive of the interaction between two physical objects: one bumps another, the other moves. And conceiving of mental interactions is equally simple: one idea sparks another, or a memory affects your mood. So when I talk about the relation between mind and matter, I'm referring to these concepts. To date, no one has presented the world with a resoundingly and unanimously satisfying solution. There have been countless theories put forward that resulted in factions and small followings, but none have been so overpowering that the world as a whole has ever been able to say "Ah! At last, we have the answer!" Of course, this is not to say that my theory will be the first, not by a long shot, but I do mean to introduce it as a plausible alternative to the most well-known theories we still hold onto today. In my humble opinion, I do believe my theory to be unique and to have its own special edge (which I'll point out in another paper), and of course *I* believe it to make the most sense out of all other theories built to solve the same problem (why would I hold onto it otherwise?), but the reader can judge for him/herself whether or not this seems true.



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Website Structure

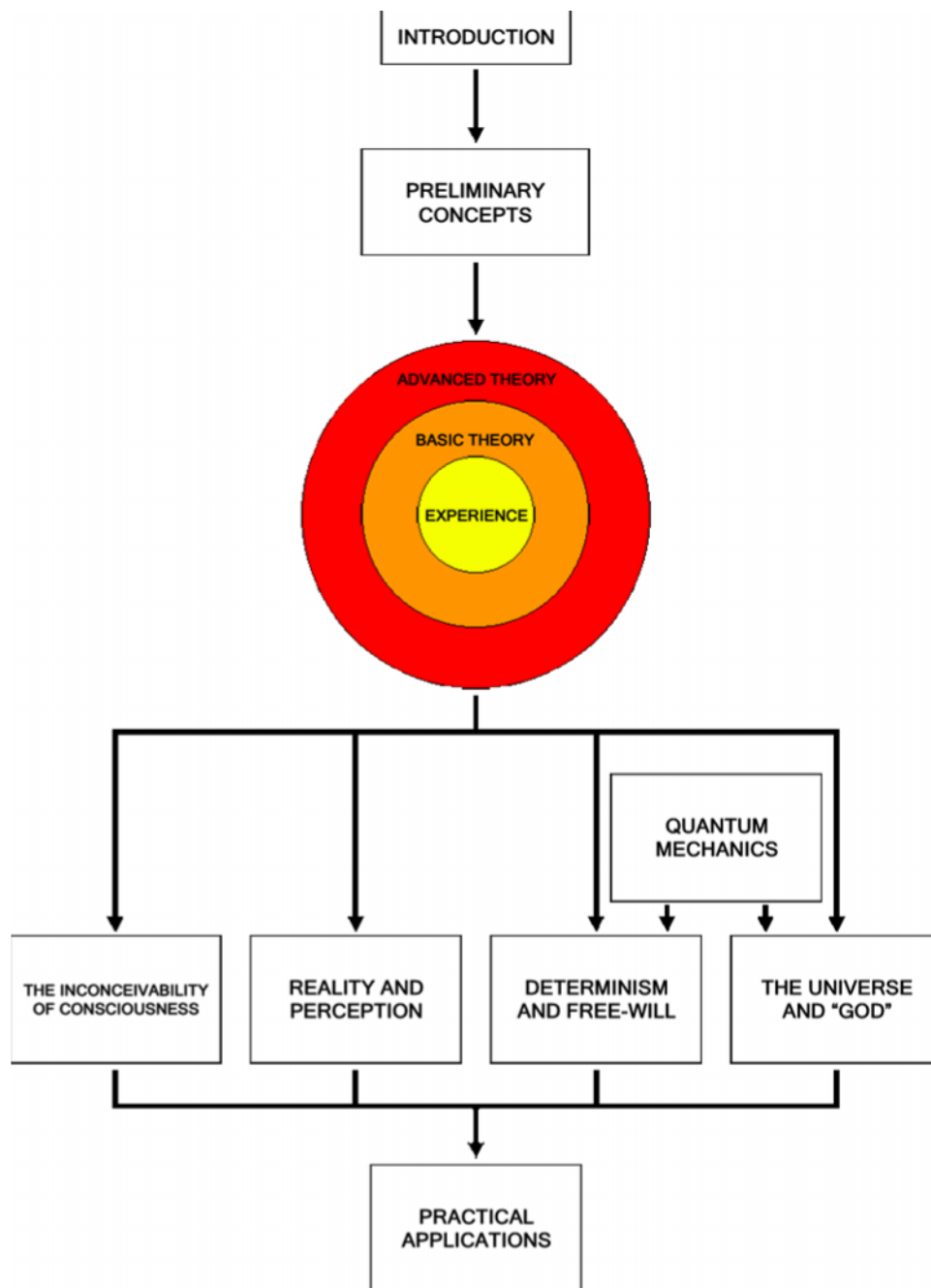


Figure 1: Structure of this website.



Dualism



Monism




Subjectivism










Figure 1 shows the structure of the relationship between all the papers included in this website. Although the order in which the reader should get through these papers is less than clear by this figure, there are links to the left of this page, and assuming you have javascript enabled on your browser, to the right as well, and they list each paper in the proper order. Besides this introduction, the reader should start with *Preliminary Concepts*, which covers some prerequisite concepts that are necessary for a thorough understanding of my theory - these include some basics on neurology and the more commonly known ideas that philosophers of mind are familiar with. The reader may skip this paper if he/she feels his/her understanding of these topics is adequate enough to delve fully into brand new material. The theory itself is divided into two papers titled *The Basic Theory of Mind and Matter* and *The Advanced Theory of Mind and Matter*. Together, they form the complete body of MM-Theory (as I call it). The Basic Theory has, at its core, a customized definition of "experience" as well as a formal correlative description for the relation between mind (or experience) and the brain. The Basic Theory gives this correlation only as a *descriptive formula* (as opposed to an explanation) for such a relation, and doesn't diverge too much from a crude **Cartesian Dualism**. The full theory, the reader should be aware, is *not* dualist however, and the Advanced Theory extends our customized definition of "experience" along with our descriptive correlation to all matter and physical systems in the universe, and fuses the material and the mental into one ubiquitous substance ("substance" in this case being used liberally). Ultimately, the theory does aim at an explanation, and is finally rendered as a brand of **monism**.

With the exception of *Practical Applications*, all other papers center around what I've deemed the most pressing issues and implications that follow from the general theory. We have, to begin with, *The Inconceivability of Consciousness*, which addresses the issue of how a theory of consciousness can stand when consciousness itself is thought to be inconceivable - that is, how the mysteries of consciousness are such a tough - some may say impossible - nut to crack. I should say that I don't take a contrary stance on this notion, but seeing as my theory reduces consciousness to something more fundamental - namely, being - I take being to be the troublesome issue, and my account of how consciousness reduces to it a feasible equivalent to a fully conceivable solution. Then there is *Reality and Perception* where I expound and rectify the most conspicuous pseudo-paradoxes that typically come up as objections to a **subjectivist** theory like mine. Between *Reality and Perception* and *Determinism and Free-Will*, there is a brief overview of quantum mechanics. The reader will need at least a rudimentary understand of the concepts therein, so I have provided the paper *Quantum Mechanics* at this point since the following two papers assume the reader has this understand. The reader may skip this paper if he/she feels his/her understanding of quantum mechanics is up to specs. From there, we go on to *Determinism and Free-Will* where we explore what kind of implications my theory has for

free-will and determinism, and visa-versa. Before the last paper, we have *The Universe and "God"* where I touch on the religious and theological aspects of the theory. Indeed there are some profound ones. One major implication of the theory is that there is indeed some kind of god-like ultimate being serving as the foundation of existence, and I feel it is important to touch on this notion and explore what can and can't be said about it. Finally, in *Practical Applications*, we explore the many ways by which the principles of the theory can be applied in a practical sense, proposing the feasibility of a systematized methodology for producing powerful "mental technologies".

Margin Icons

Throughout this website, you'll find icons in the left hand margin. You might have already seen a few in this introduction, such as the dictionary symbol  above. These signify further information that I've made available, information on certain points made in the adjacent paragraph. These points will usually be indicated by one or two words in bold. Below is a list of these icons along with a description of what they mean.

	Dictionary: Click this to get a definition of the term in bold in the adjacent paragraph.
	Principle: Click this for a reminder of the principle mentioned in the adjacent paragraph.
	Sidenote: Click this for a sidenote relating to the topic of the adjacent paragraph.
	Generic Link: Click this for further information on the world wide web pertaining to the topic of the adjacent paragraph.
	Neuroscience: Click this for an explanation of the neurological topic in the adjacent paragraph.
	Physics: Click this for an explanation of the physics topic in the adjacent paragraph.
	Computer Science: Click this for an explanation of the computer science topic in the adjacent paragraph.
	Philosophy: Click this for an explanation of the philosophical topic in the adjacent paragraph.
	Rule: Click this for a reminder of the lingual rule mentioned in the adjacent paragraph. This mainly pertains to the fundamental principles underlying a rudimentary subjectivist language we will expound in the paper <i>Reality and Perception</i> .

Quick Links

I have included a collection of links at the top of every paper, including this introduction. The same collection is at the bottom of every paper, along with a link to return to the top. If the reader has javascript enabled, this collection will also be available in a drop-down menu at the top of your screen (it will follow you as you scroll up or down the page). Click these links to be taken to the specific sections of the paper you are viewing. For example, if you click on "Website Structure" at the top of this introduction, you will be taken to this minor section. If you click on "Quick Links" at the top of this introduction, you will be taken to this minor section. The difference between a major and minor section is just a matter of nesting. All papers are split into major sections, and each one has (sometimes) a handful of minor sections nested within it.

PDFs

The reader has the option of either reading these papers in his/her preferred web browser or downloading them as PDFs. Should he/she go with the latter, he/she can find download links in the left hand margin at the top of any page in this website. I should mention that there are advantages and disadvantages to either approach. The advantage to downloading PDFs is that, once downloaded, it's quicker, whereas revisiting this website time and time again may require some patience on the reader's part while the heavy load of images takes its time to download. On slower machines, therefore, PDFs may be the way to go. On the other hand, there is a disadvantage to PDFs: I have not been able to generate them with the utmost integrity and all the bells and whistles I had hoped for. For example, some images and figures may bleed across two pages. For another example, the hyperlinks are removed. When it comes to the sidenotes in particular (which one would normally get to by clicking on the margin icons at the left), I have gotten around this problem by including them in an appendix attached to each PDF. But for all other links, I regret that the reader will have to go online to follow them. Needless to say, it is a work in progress, and I will get around to ironing out these wrinkles in due time. As for now, however, it is functional, and the reader can proceed to explore any area of this website without trouble.

My Philosophy

To elaborate a bit on the central thesis of this website, let me just say a few things about what I believe my theory on mind and matter accomplishes. As I already pointed out, it addressed head-on the problem of mind and matter - the problem of how a material entity like the brain can have any relation to something so immaterial as consciousness - but in solving this problem, it goes beyond it with implications on cosmology, metaphysics, and the foundations of reality itself - in fact, I'm willing to go so far as to say the very *essence* of reality - that is, of "realness" - for that, in the end, is precisely what the theory turns out to be. I used to describe my theory as one that explains what consciousness is. But after years of refining my thought on the matter, I came to grips with the fact that, despite my theory, I still had no idea what consciousness was. So instead, I settled for a description of my theory in terms of the *relation* between consciousness and the brain; not consciousness itself. But as it turned out, even that wasn't enough; it wasn't wrong per se, and I still use this formulation at times, but there were other, and better, formulations. To date, the best way I can put it is in terms of ontology. To understand this, one has to realize that the solution I bring to bear on the problem doesn't exactly tie up all loose ends, but rather hands whatever loose ends remain to a seemingly unrelated philosophical mystery - namely, the problem of ontology - that is, the problem of being and what it essentially is. Like consciousness, being - that quintessential "stuff" that constitutes all things that exist and necessitates their existence - is, it seems reasonable to say, beyond the grasp of human understanding. Well, it follows from my theory that the whole reason why consciousness and being seem to share this eternal obstinacy to human inquiry is because the former reduces to the latter - that is, consciousness simply *is* being. Therefore, my official formulation on what my theory does - that is,

what it contributes to philosophy - is to show how two virtually unrelated philosophical topics are indeed one - only the manner in which they are articulated, in terms of vocabulary and conceptual models, distinguishing them. The service rendered to philosophy, in other words, is one of economization - that is, bringing a variety of ideas and concepts, and indeed whole fields, together into a simpler and more cohesive unity. That this unity centers around a fresh new look on the nature of being is why my theory ends up being a theory on reality - that is, "realness" - itself. How this philosophical economization is carried out is what I've set out to show in this website.

You may begin with [Preliminary Concepts](#) or plunge right into [The Basic Theory of Mind and Matter](#).

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Appendix

An Even Deeper Problem



Actually, for those well versed in the neurosciences, the problem is even more complicated than this. For them, the question is how does free-will fit into a brain that seems almost completely deterministic?