

# My Philosophical Views

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I have a lot of philosophical views, and I think they fit together in interesting ways. But it's hard to express them all at once. So, I've written this document for anyone interested in seeing, at a glance, my overall philosophical worldview. I plan to gradually update this document as my views continue to evolve.

I've divided the document roughly into categories: (i) structure of consciousness, (ii) metaphysics of consciousness, (iii) ethics, (iv) perception, introspection, representation, attention, (v) metaphysics, and (vi) miscellaneous. Obviously, these categories are rough and overlapping. I've included only views that are sufficiently interesting or distinctive, omitting views that are largely uncontroversial (e.g., that there's an external world, that consciousness exists, etc.).

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## Structure of Consciousness

### Subjectivity vs. Phenomenal Character

The term 'phenomenal consciousness' is systematically ambiguous between expressing *subjectivity* (the essence of consciousness, analogous to the light) vs. phenomenal character (what it's like to be an entity, analogous to the illuminated room).

### Objective Phenomenology

Purely structural facts about conscious experiences are objective phenomenal facts.

### Universal Quality-Space

Every quality belongs to a single, high-dimensional universal quality-space.

### Modeling Qualities

Qualities are best modeled using distributions (functions from points to the unit interval), rather than points, over geometric spaces.

### **Degrees of Consciousness**

Consciousness comes in degrees.

### **Microphenomenal Structure**

Experiences have non-introspectable microphenomenal structures.

### **Non-Compositional Atomism**

Total experiences are composed from collections of atomic experiences, but the phenomenal properties of wholes don't supervene on phenomenal properties (including relations) of parts.

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## **Metaphysics of Consciousness**

### **Panqualityism**

Every concrete entity has qualitative properties. The qualitative character of our experiences is the qualitative character of our brains.

### **Russellian Monism**

Physical sciences target only structural properties, leaving open the qualitative nature of physical objects. The qualitative natures of physical objects play a constitutive role in explaining the phenomenal characters of conscious experiences.

### **'Consciousness' is Sharp**

There are no borderline cases of consciousness.

### **Supernatural Consciousness**

Consciousness is highly natural. Nearby properties are much less natural.

### **Unconscious Qualities**

Qualities exist outside of consciousness. Unconscious mental states have qualitative character.

### **Artificial Phenomenology**

Necessarily, the experiences of artificial systems are phenomenally distinct from the experiences of organic systems.

### **Token Identity Theory**

Every experience is identical to some physical particular.

### **Theory-Based Definition of 'Physical'**

For a property to be physical is for it to be the kind of property that is the target of investigation by physical sciences.

### **Impossible Zombies**

Zombies are metaphysically impossible.

### **Many Minds**

There are infinitely many conscious subjects co-located at every brain.

### **Subjectivity**

On the most natural interpretations of these terms, the following identity holds: phenomenal consciousness = subjectivity = access consciousness = attention = acquaintance. Moreover, degree of attention = degree of access = degree of consciousness.

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## **Ethics**

### **Phenomenal Theory of Welfare Subjects**

Consciousness is what makes an entity a welfare subject.

### **Welfarism about Moral Status**

An entity has moral status iff it's a welfare subject.

### **Neutrality of Consciousness**

Consciousness itself is neither intrinsically valuable nor intrinsically disvaluable.

**Hedonism**

Only positively valenced experiences are good and negatively experiences bad.

**Attention Extracts Value**

The greater the extent to which a mental state occupies attention, the more value extracted from that mental state for its subject.

**Metaethical Experientialism**

Value facts about experiences are explained by phenomenal facts.

**Metaethical Pluralism**

Both metaethical realism and metaethical anti-realism are true, just for different classes of ethical facts. Ethical facts grounded in phenomenology are objective; ethical facts grounded in the contents of our evaluative attitudes are subjective.

**Experience Machine**

One's life goes (objectively) best in the experience machine.

**Totalism**

The value of a world is the total welfare of that world.

**Repugnance**

For any population of excellent lives, there's a better population consisting of only lives barely worth living.

**Monstrosity**

For any population of excellent lives, there's a better population consisting of just a single utility monster.

**Expansionism**

Worlds with greater densities of value are better.

**Anti-Pareto**

Even if world A is better than world B for every individual (and both worlds contain the same individuals), world B might still be better overall.

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## **Perception, Introspection, Attention, Representation**

### **Sense-Datum Theory**

To have a perceptual experience is to be acquainted with some sense-data. What it's like to have a perceptual experience is a matter of the sense-data with which one is acquainted.

### **Introspection**

Introspection is fundamentally different from perception because there's no distinction between the target and basis of introspective judgments. All introspective judgments are immune to errors of misleading evidence, but nevertheless fallible.

### **Phenomenal Concepts**

Phenomenal concepts are almost never constituted by their target experiences. Instead, they are constituted by imaginative experiences that represent their target experiences.

### **The Conceptual A Posteriori**

Some conceptual truths (namely, phenomenal truths that are knowable on the basis of one's phenomenal concepts) are a posteriori.

### **Inexact Phenomenal Knowledge**

Knowing what it's like to have an experience varies along a spectrum, from more exact to more approximate.

### **Representational Format**

Representational format is a matter of the rules of a system's interpretation function.

### **Analog Representation**

Analog representation is a matter of structural correspondence between vehicles and contents.

### **Iconic Representation**

Iconic representations are those that are analog, molecular, and "locative."

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## Metaphysics

### Naturalness

Properties are partially ordered with respect to naturalness. More natural properties are better targets of inquiry, more referentially magnetic, more inductively generalizable, and better candidates for laws.

### Plenitude

For every consistent modal profile, there's an object with that modal profile.

### Universalism

Every collection of objects composes.

### Abundance

Nearly every predicate denotes a property.

### Many Worlds

Every metaphysically possible world is concrete.

### Qualities Ground Powers

Causal powers are grounded in qualities. (Slogan: Things behave the way they do because of the way they are).

### Powers Ground Laws

The laws of nature are grounded in the powers of qualities of objects in the world. Necessarily, if two worlds contain exactly the same kinds of objects, then they have the same laws of nature.

### Zero Values

To have a zero value *wrt* F isn't necessarily just to lack all other values *wrt* F.

### Dimensions as Quotients

For D to be a dimension of F is for D-space to be a quotient of F-space.