



# The Mind/Body Problem

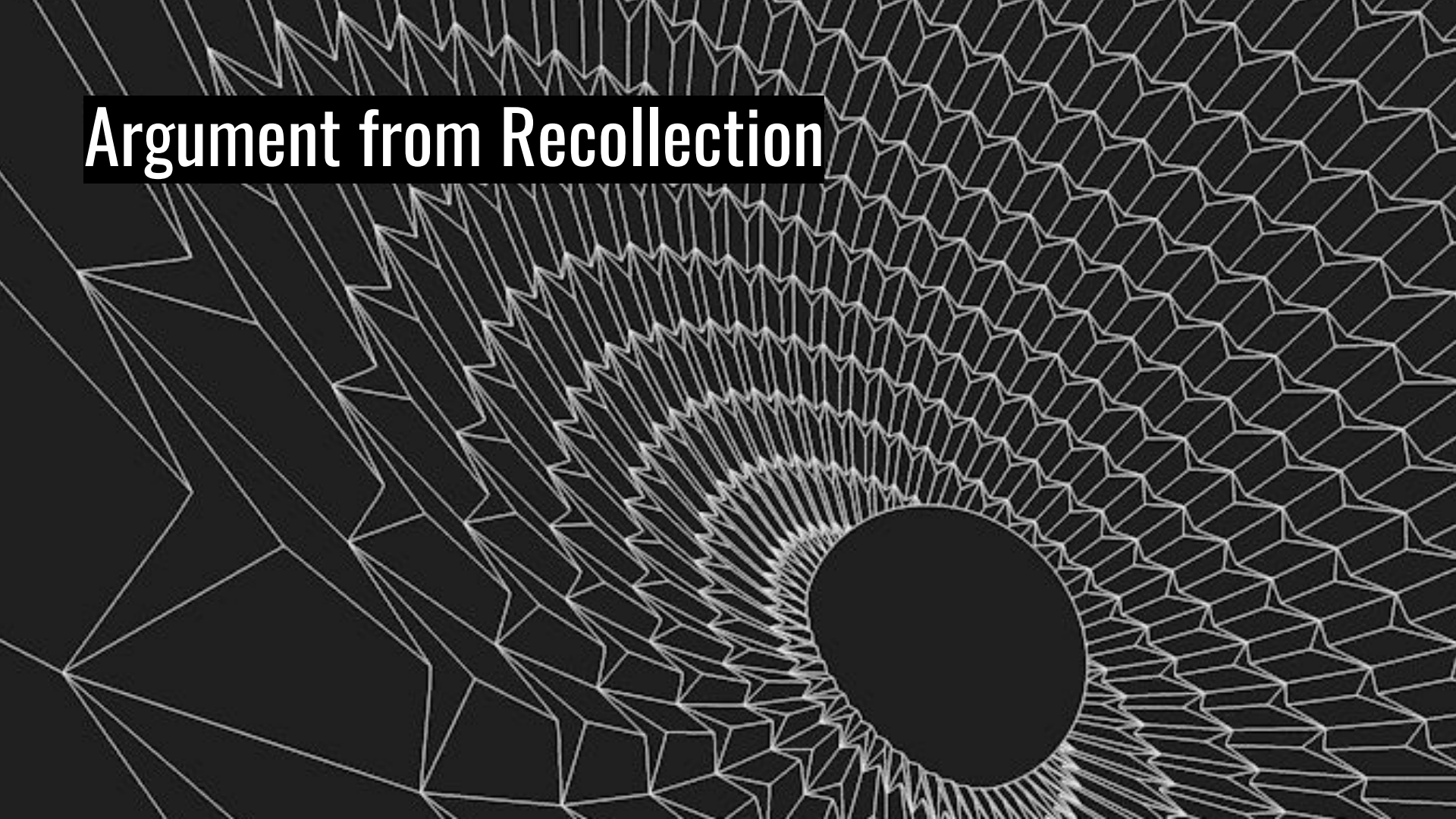


*Food for thought...*

**Question:**

**How do you know a Platonic Form if you've never seen one?**

# Argument from Recollection



A person is seen from behind, looking at a glowing digital globe. The globe is surrounded by a complex network of blue and green lines, resembling a data network or a digital cityscape. The background is dark, suggesting a night sky or a deep space environment. The overall scene is futuristic and digital.

**Plato argues that we recognize the Forms because our souls existed in Platonic Heaven before we were born.**

Does God exist?

Do we have free will?

Do we have souls?

Do we only act from self-interest?

Kant or the Utilitarians?

Is morality relative?

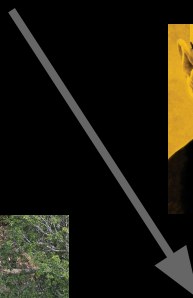
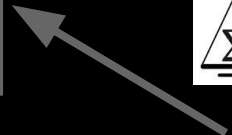
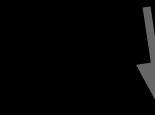
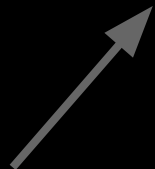
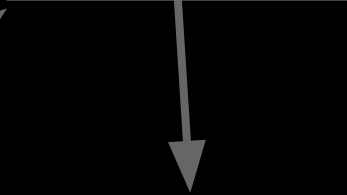
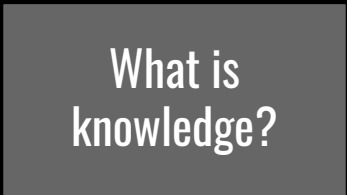
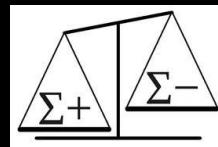
What is knowledge?

Empiricism Or Rationalism?

Possible Solutions:

1. Free Will
2. Morality
3. Eastern Philosophy

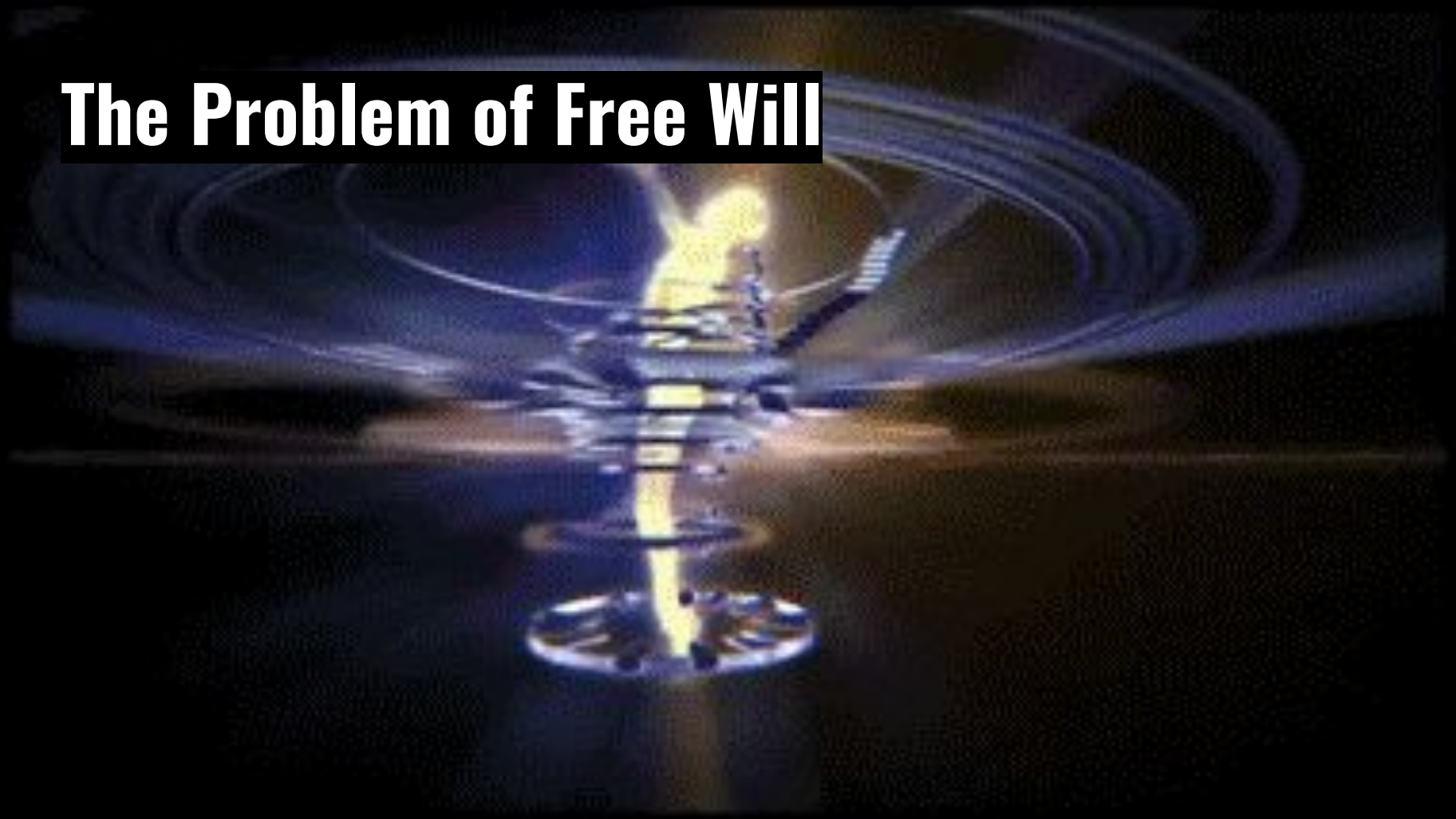
# POE



# **The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil**



# The Problem of Free Will





A hand is shown from the bottom, cupping a miniature solar system. The central star is a bright, glowing orange-yellow sphere with a textured surface. Surrounding it are several planets of various sizes and colors, including blue, grey, and brown. The background is a dark, starry space with a faint blue glow on the left side. The overall scene is illuminated by the light of the star, creating a warm, golden glow on the hand and the planets.

# The Problem of Evil



# The Regress Argument



# DILEMMA #8

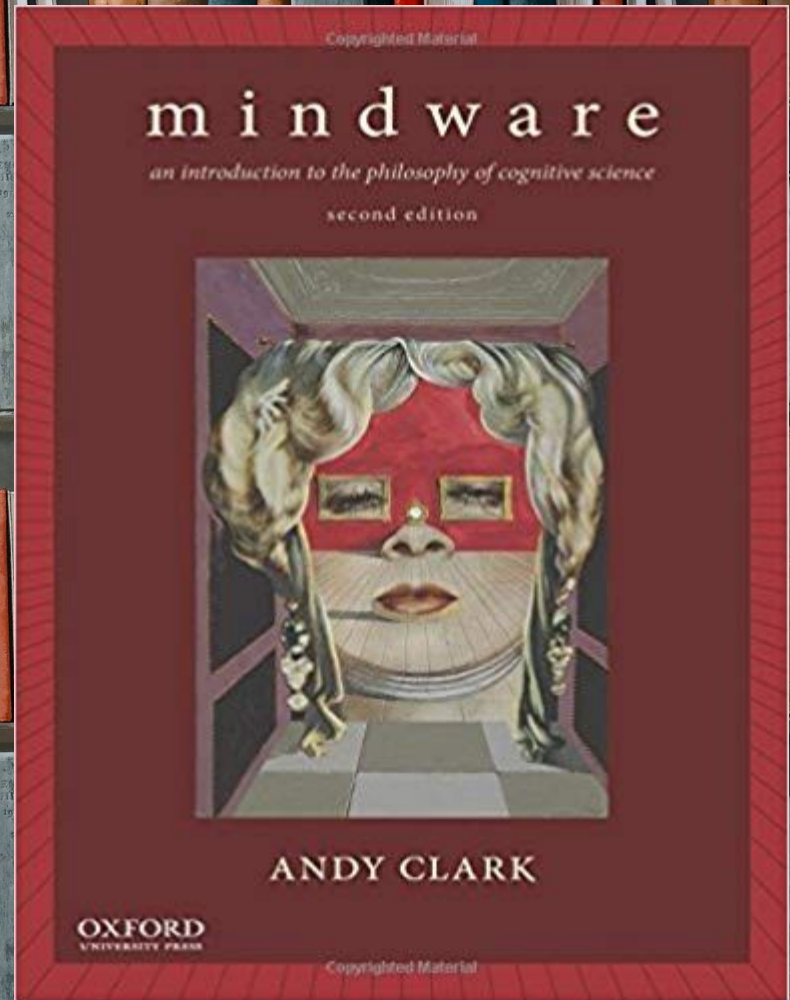
Do we have souls?



**Dualism v. Materialism:  
Important Concepts**

In his excellent introduction to the philosophy of cognitive science, Andy Clark (2014: 250-8) provides a rough-and-ready survey of historically important positions in the philosophy of mind.

Cognitive Science tends to pick up where these positions leave off...



**Dualism** is the view that there exists two distinct types of things in the world, material things (bodies, tables, chairs) and immaterial minds/souls.

**Materialism** is the view there only exists material things; i.e., our brain is a sophisticated *material* thing that produces consciousness.

**DUALISM**

**MATERIALISM**



**DUALISM**



# DESCARTES' ARGUMENT FROM INTROSPECTION



I can doubt the existence of my physical body (and all other material objects), but I cannot doubt the existence of my mind.

This shows there are two distinct types of things in the world.

# **KANT'S OBJECTION**

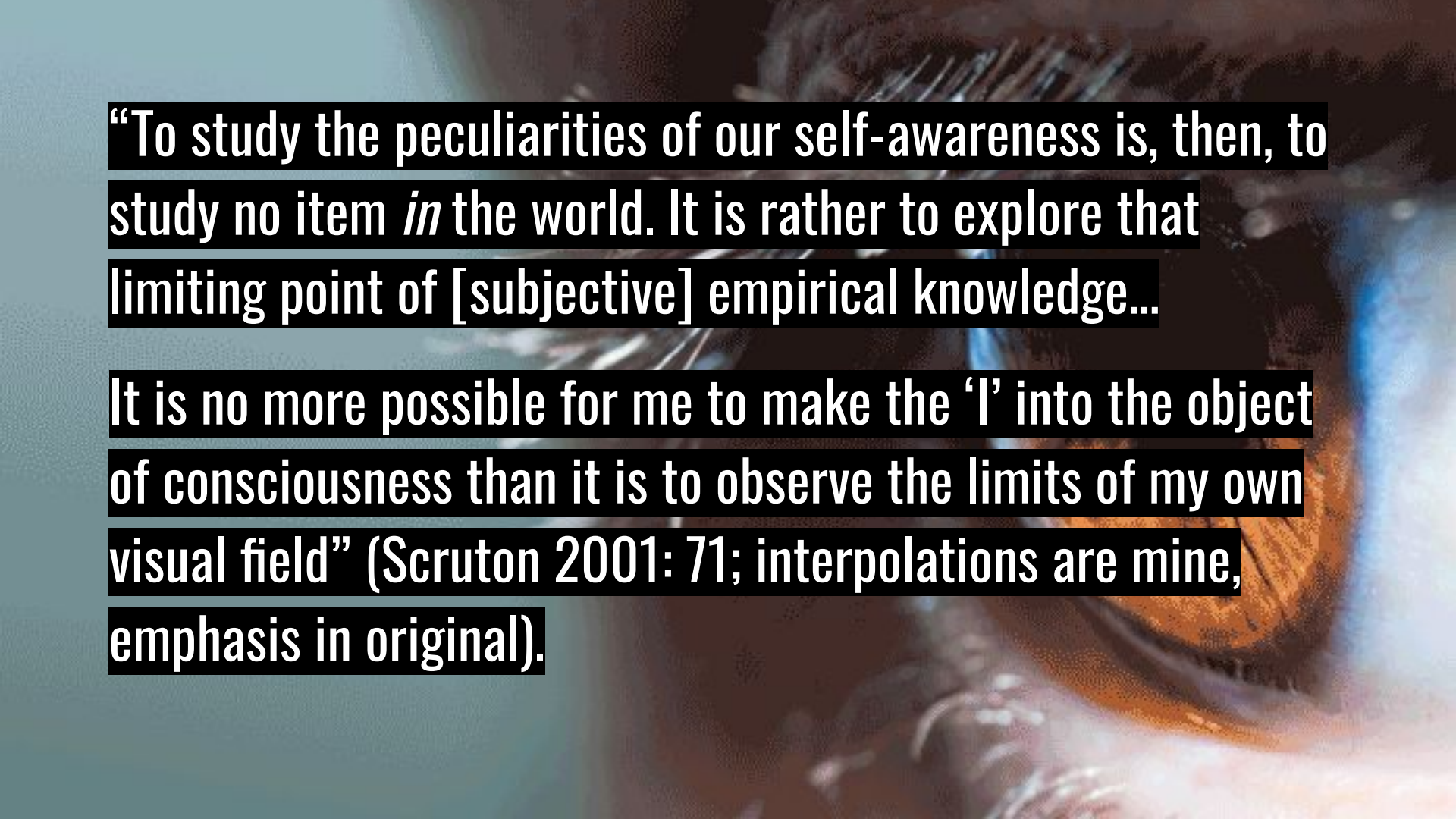
Although there is a unity  
to my present consciousness,  
it tells me nothing about the **kind**  
of thing that my consciousness is.



Although there is a unity  
to my present consciousness,  
it tells me nothing about the **kind**  
of thing that my consciousness is.

It is “quite impossible, by means of...  
simple self-consciousness, to determine the manner in which  
I exist, whether it be as substance or accident [i.e., property]”  
(Critique of Pure Reason (2e): 420, interpolations are mine).



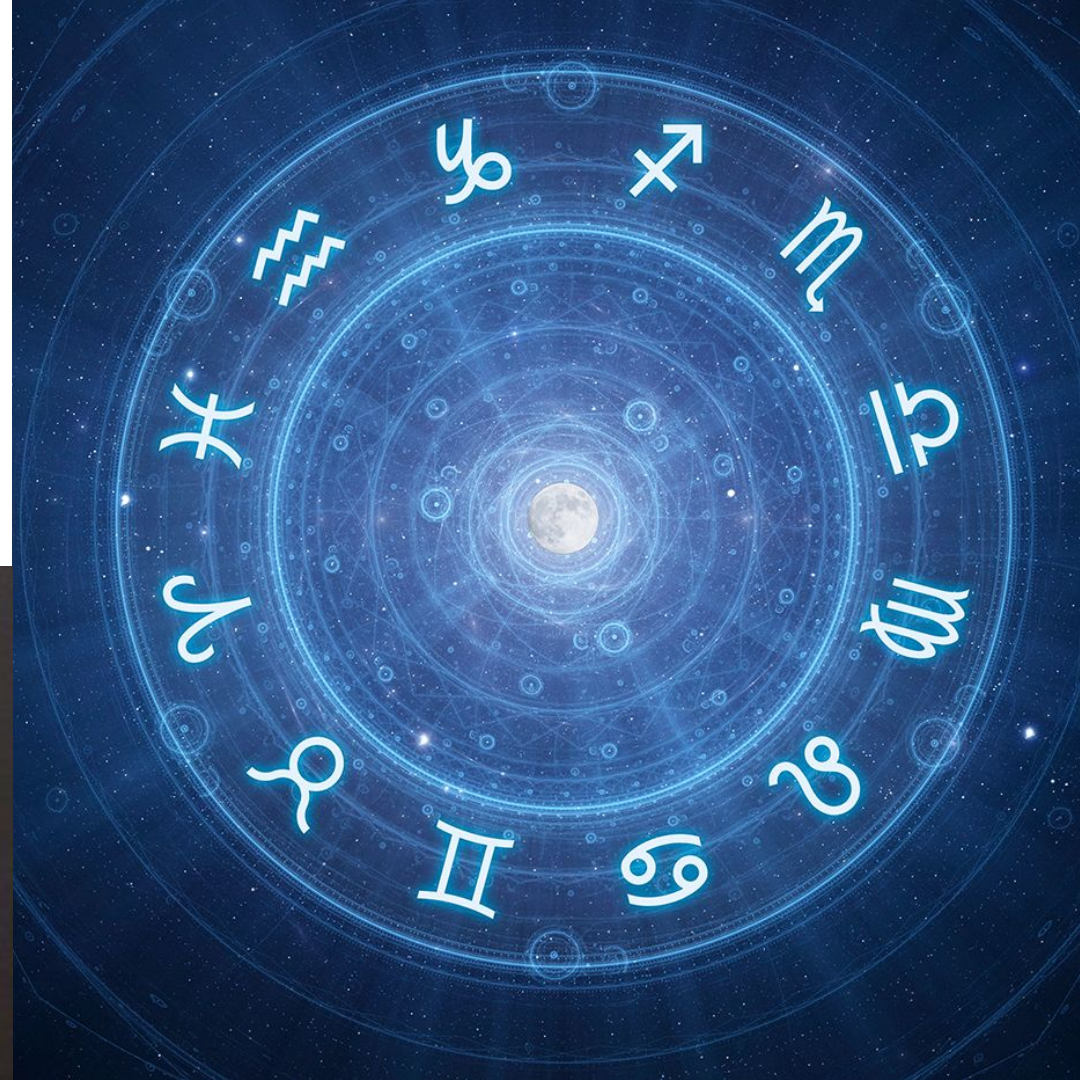
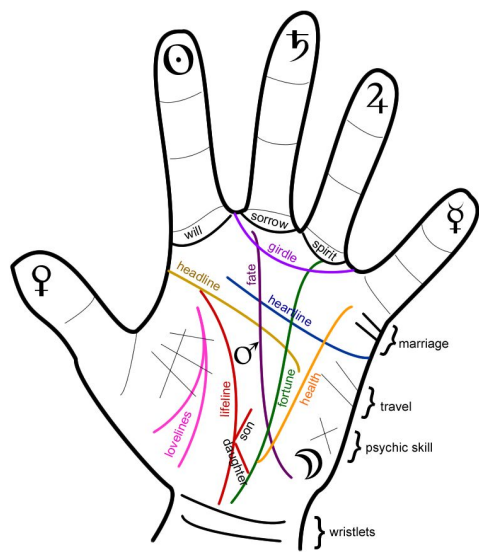
A close-up photograph of a human eye, focusing on the iris and the blue contact lens. The eye is looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and out of focus.

“To study the peculiarities of our self-awareness is, then, to study no item *in* the world. It is rather to explore that limiting point of [subjective] empirical knowledge...

It is no more possible for me to make the ‘I’ into the object of consciousness than it is to observe the limits of my own visual field” (Scruton 2001: 71; interpolations are mine, emphasis in original).

**OTHER  
ARGUMENTS FOR  
DUALISM**

**SOME ARGUE THAT  
THE EXISTENCE OF  
PARANORMAL  
PHENOMENA  
SUGGESTS THAT  
SPIRITS/SOULS MUST  
EXIST.**





YES

NO

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ



1234567890

GOOD BYE

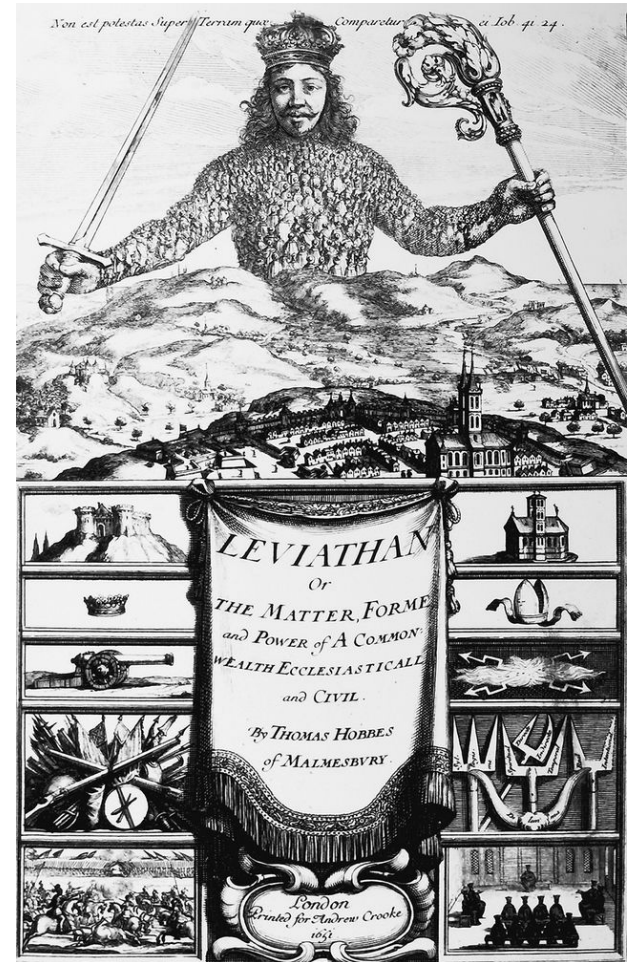


**BUT THE TRUTH OF THE  
PHENOMENA IN QUESTION IS  
(VERY) CONTENTIOUS...**

# **MATERIALISM**

# HOBBES' ARGUMENT

Hobbes argued that he can explain all the workings of the mind through material things alone. If this is possible, by Ockham's Razor, we should choose materialism over dualism.





# THE CORRELATION/DEPENDENCE ARGUMENT

It looks like our mental events are explicable through, related to, or dependent on some physical event. For example,

- i. pain corresponds to the stimulus of a- or c-fibers;
- ii. memory is purely material (which is why you get amnesia if you get hit really hard in the head); and
- iii. physical substances, eg drugs and alcohol, affect our mental experience.

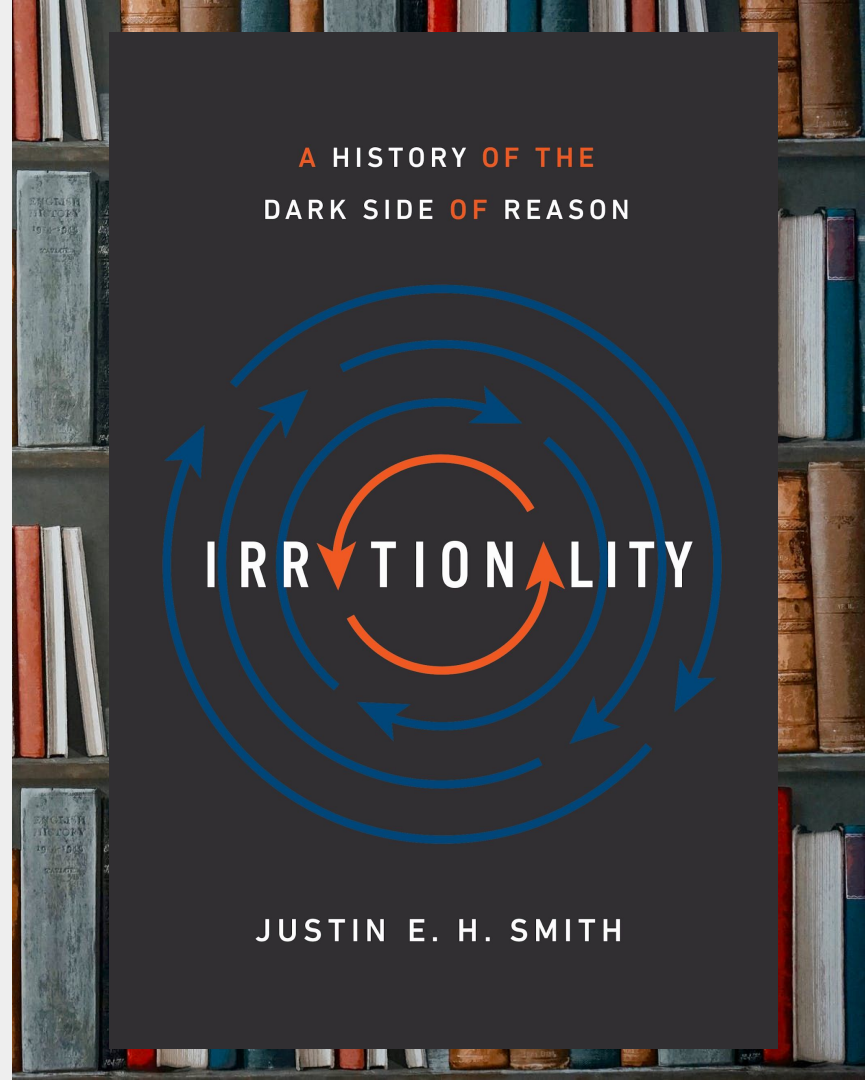
It seems like the mental just is the physical.

# THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM

1. If dualism is true, then the soul (which is non-physical) controls the body (which is physical).
2. But it is physically impossible for a non-physical thing to interact with a physical thing.
3. Therefore, dualism is false

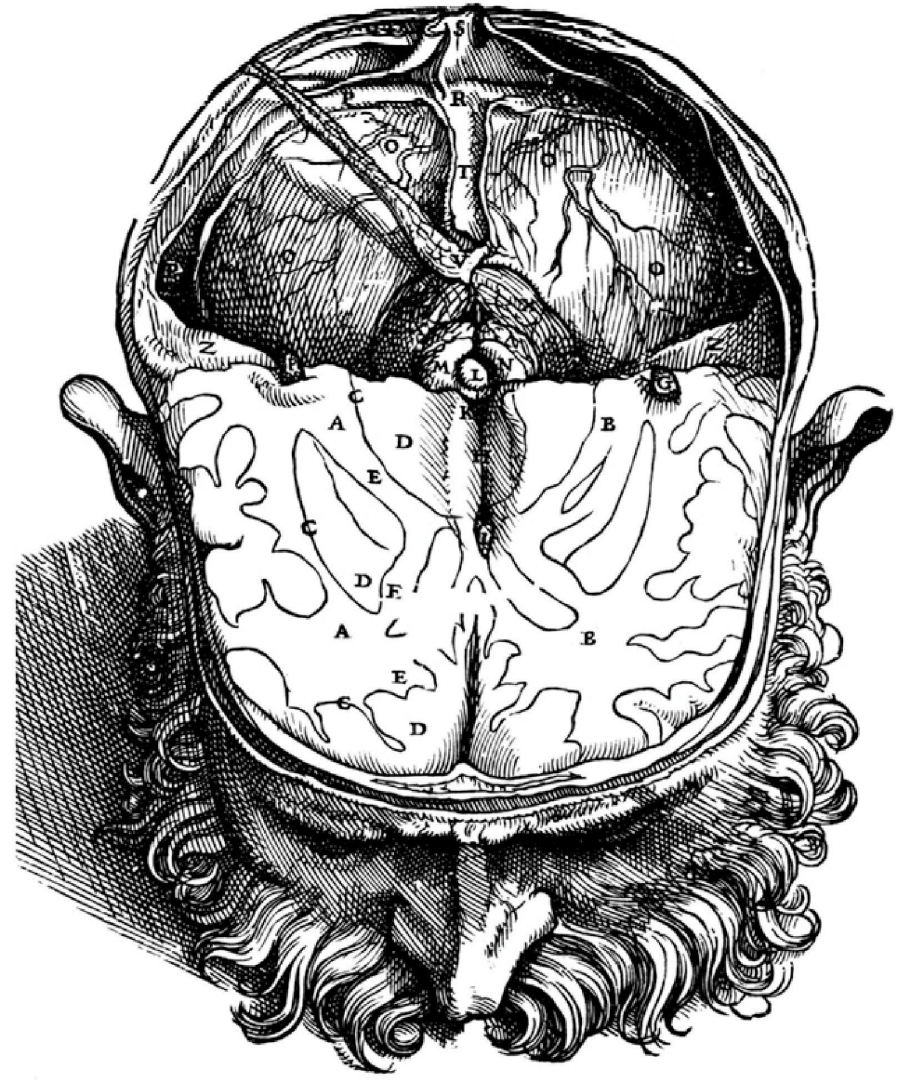
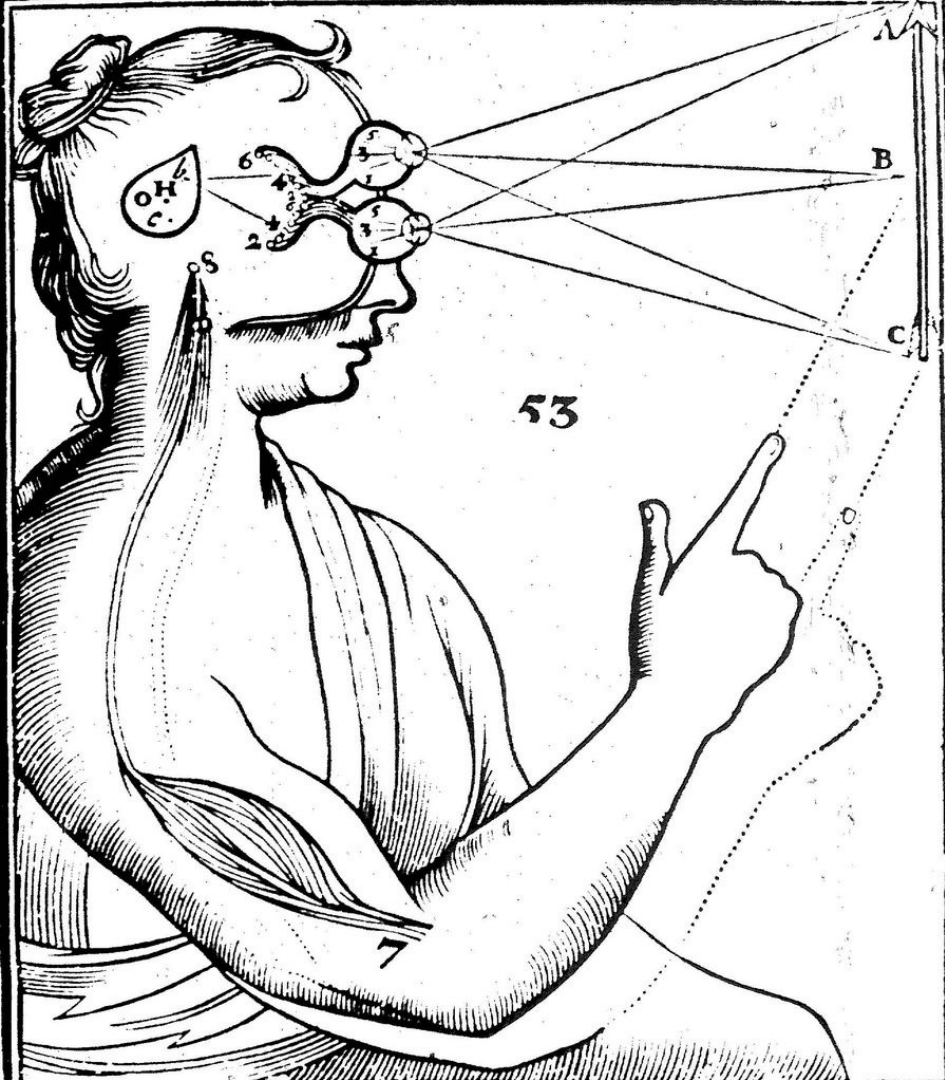
Smith (2019, chapter 3) reminds us that Leibniz pointed out that the Turks smoked opium in order to lift up their spirits.

This, Leibniz noted, contradicts Descartes' claim that the spirit (or soul) is completely physical, for if the spirit were completely non-physical, then physical substances would have no effect on it.









**THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM IS  
LARGELY REGARDED AS THE  
GREATEST SKEPTICAL  
CHALLENGE TO DUALISM...**

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# Storytime!





**Garry Kasparov, World Chess Champion (1985-2000)**



СПАРОВ НА ПІДТРИМКУ УКРАЇНИ  
6 ГРУДНЯ 2014

1985

Kasparov.co



**Garry Kasparov beats 32 computers simultaneously (1985)**



**Deep Blue plays and loses against Kasparov (1996)**





**Deep Blue defeats Kasparov (1997)**

Here are three *materialist* positions on how the mind works...

# Behaviorism

**Behaviorism** is an umbrella term for a family of views that claim that:

- a. either mental states don't exist or they might as well not exist (since they cannot be studied directly), so
- b. we should focus research instead on behavioral dispositions (see Clark 2014: 253 for more).

# Behaviorism

“[M]ental talk [only] picks out *behavioral dispositions*.

It isolates what so-and-so is likely to do in such and such circumstances.

It does not pick out a state of an **inner** mental sanctum” (see Clark 2014: 253; emphasis added).

# FEATURES OF BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY



# Identity Theory

Identity Theory is the view that mental states *are* brain states.

# THE CORRELATION/DEPENDENCE ARGUMENT

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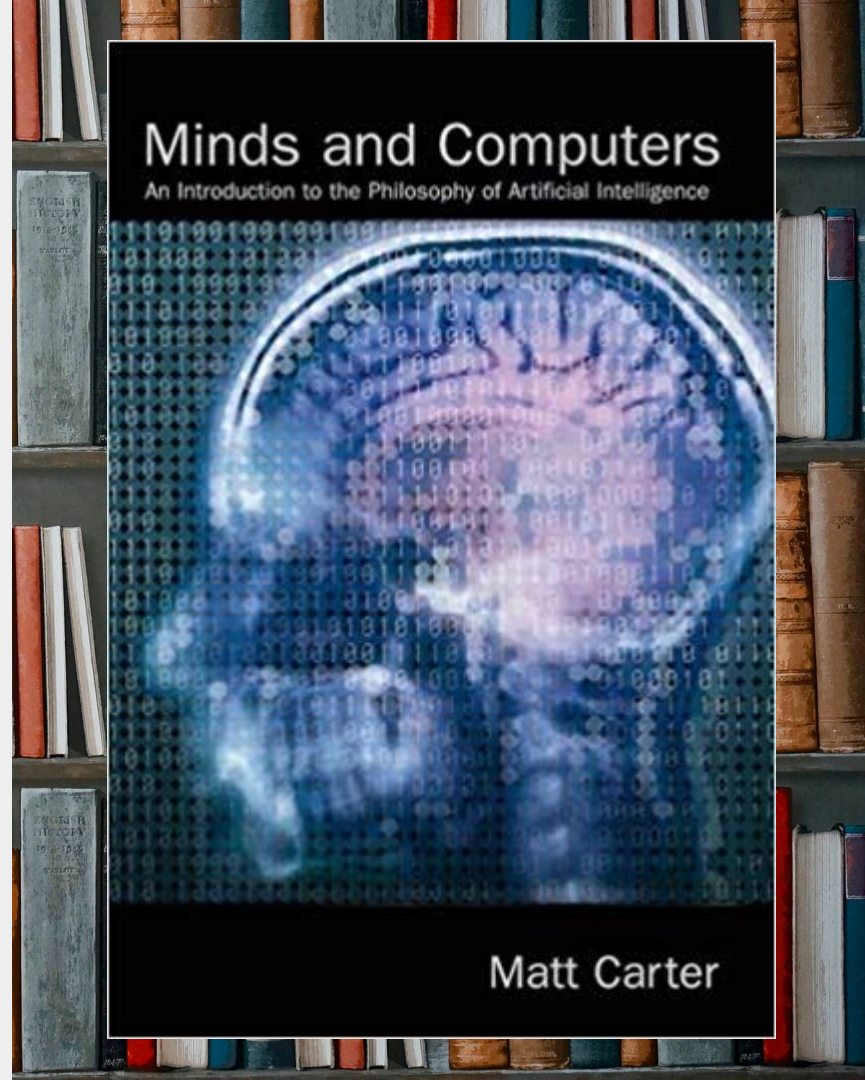
It seems like the mental just is the physical.

S | D E B A R

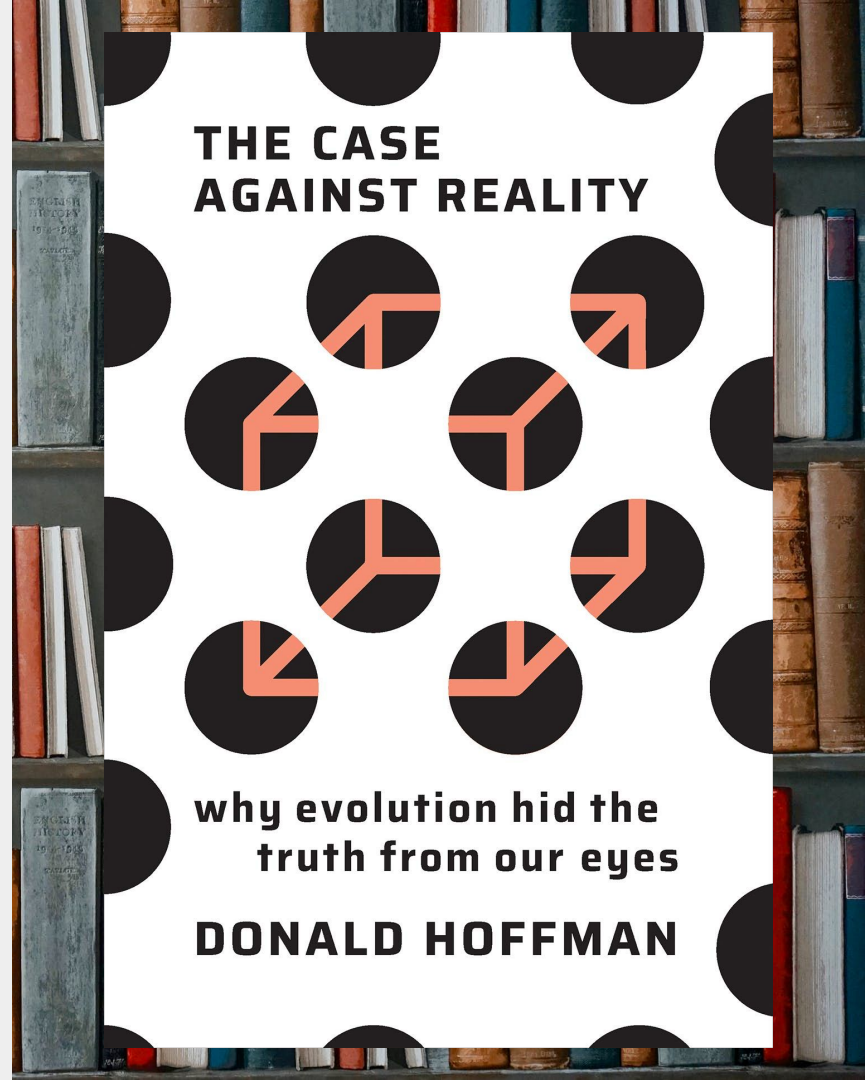


One of the most common responses to identity theory is the empirical demonstration that similar mental states are not always realized in the same brain state.

This is because of neuroplasticity, the brain's capacity to perform the same mental function in a different part of the brain (Carter 2007: 37-42).



**DONALD HOFFMAN (2019: 4-5)  
REMINDS US THAT THIS IS A  
SILLY VIEW.**



“Like a rock, we have bona fide physical properties. But unlike a rock, we have conscious experiences and propositional attitudes. Are these also physical?”

If so, it's not obvious: What is the mass of dizziness, the velocity of a headache, or the position of the wonder why Chris won't call?

In each case, the question itself seems to harbor confusion, and to mismatch categories. Dizziness is not the kind of thing that can be weighed on a scale; a wonder has no spatial coordinates; a headache can't be clocked with a radar gun” (Hoffman 2019: 4).



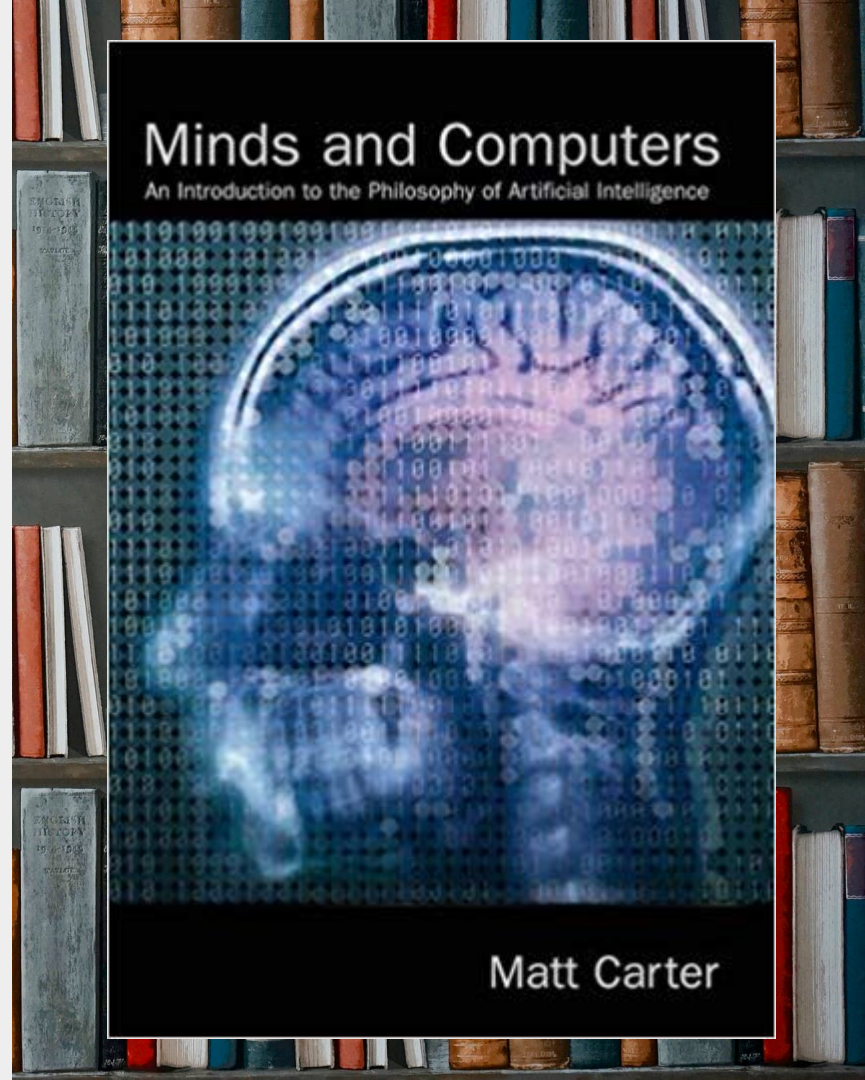
# Functionalism

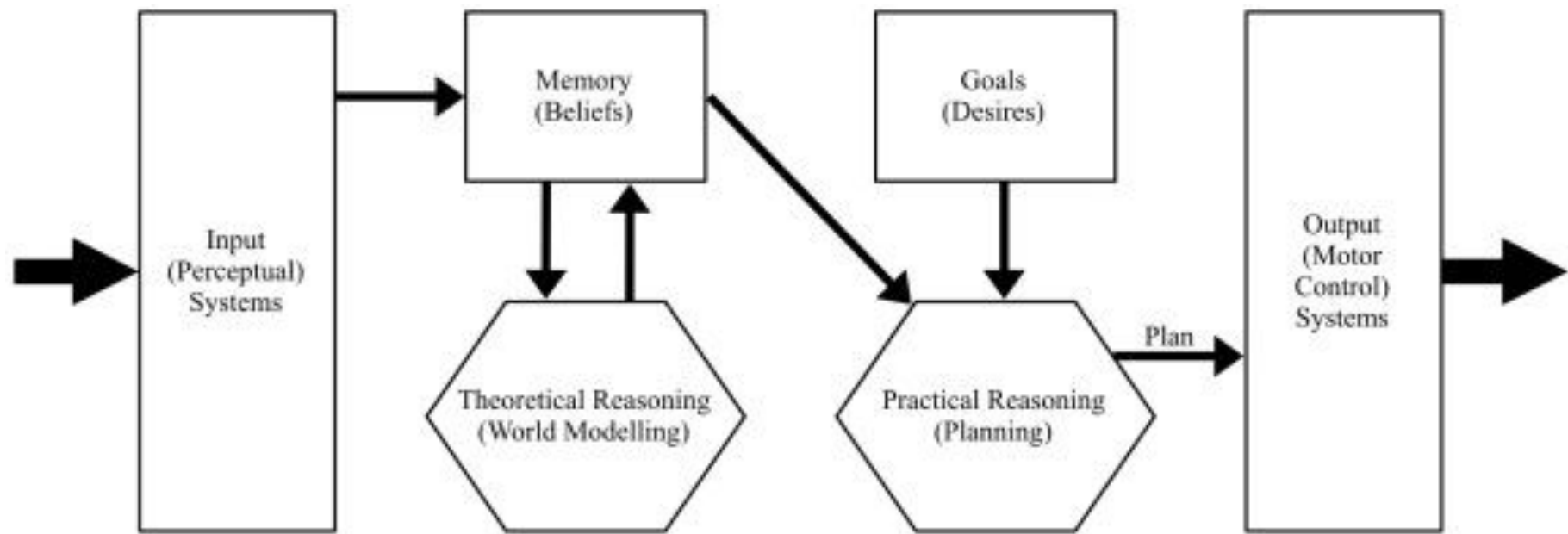
**Functionalism** is the view that what makes something a mental state has nothing to do with what it is made out of, but rather has to do with the role that it plays in the system of which it is a part.

According to **computationalism** (a version of functionalism), “mental operations are held to be *computations*. So to have a mind... *just is* to be engaged in certain computational processes” (Carter 2007: 95).

brain  $\approx$  computer

mind  $\approx$  program







**THE CASE  
AGAINST REALITY**

**why evolution hid the  
truth from our eyes**

**DONALD HOFFMAN**

Donald Hoffman (2019) doesn't believe any of these approaches solve what Chalmers (2007) calls the **hard problem of consciousness**:  
How do non-conscious things give rise to consciousness?

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



HOW TO  
**CREATE**  
A  
**MIND**

THE SECRET OF  
HUMAN THOUGHT REVEALED



**RAY KURZWEIL**

AUTHOR OF THE SINGULARITY IS NEAR

But some theorists believe this approach has a lot of promise...