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NON-PHYSICALIST THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Hedda Hassel Mørch

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences



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Hedda Hassel Mørch
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Non-physicalist Theories of Consciousness

Elements in Philosophy of Mind

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Hedda Hassel Mørch
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

Author for correspondence: Hedda Hassel Mørch, hedda.morch@inn.no

Abstract: Is consciousness a purely physical phenomenon? Most contemporary philosophers and theorists hold that it is, and take this to be supported by modern science. But a significant minority endorses non-physicalist theories such as dualism, idealism, and panpsychism, among other reasons, because it may seem impossible to fully explain consciousness, or capture what it is like to be in conscious states (such as seeing red or being in pain), in physical terms. This Element will introduce the main non-physicalist theories of consciousness and explain the most important arguments for them, and consider how they each respond to the scientific and other arguments in support of physicalism. This Element is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Keywords: consciousness, non-physicalism, dualism, panpsychism, Russellian monism

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