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Elements in the Philosophy of Mind

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THE METAPHYSICS OF MIND

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The Metaphysics of Mind

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Abstract: This Element presents and discusses the major contemporary theories of the nature of mind, including Dualism, Physicalism, Role Functionalism, Russellian Monism, Panpsychism, and Eliminativism. Its primary goal is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the theories in question, including their prospects for explaining the special qualitative character of sensations and perceptual experiences; the special outer-directedness of beliefs, desires, and other intentional states; and – more generally – the place of the mind in the world of nature, and the relation between mental states and the behaviors that they (seem to) cause. It also discusses, briefly, some further questions about the metaphysics of mind, namely, whether groups of individuals, or entire communities, can possess mental states that cannot be reduced to the mental states of the individuals in those communities and whether the boundaries between mind and world are as sharp as they may seem.

Keywords: mind–body problem, Dualism, Physicalism, consciousness, belief

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