

# Russellian monism

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Chalmers lays out (but does not endorse) the following argument in favor of Russellian monism:

1. The conceivability argument rules out materialism.
2. The causal argument rules out dualism.
3. Neither the conceivability argument nor the causal argument make trouble for Russellian monism.

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C. Russellian monism is true.

Of course, as Chalmers recognizes, matters are not this simple. While he thinks that the causal argument and the conceivability argument make serious trouble for dualism and materialism, he does not think that either is conclusive. But insofar as Russellian monism can avoid both of these arguments, this looks like a reasonably strong argument in favor of the view.

What is Russellian monism? In general we can distinguish between dispositions to do certain things and the categorical bases of those dispositions. Fragility is a dispositional property of a vase; it is explained by categorical (non-dispositional) properties of the base, e.g. its microphysical structure.

Now think about the basic particles characterized by physics – say, quarks and electrons. Physics (on one view) tells us only the dispositional properties of these things. Following Chalmers, let's call the categorical properties which explain these dispositional properties of elementary particles *quiddities*.

Russellian monism is the view that the consciousness of macroscopic things like us is explained in terms of the quiddities of the particles that compose us.

What are these quiddities? There are two different answers, and two corresponding versions of Russellian monism.

1. They are phenomenal properties (so there is something it is like to be an electron). This is panpsychism.

2. They are proto-phenomenal properties (non-phenomenal properties which somehow explain the phenomenal ones). This is panprotopsychism.

Are these views versions of materialism or not? Chalmers' distinction between narrowly physical and broadly physical properties.

Why does Russellian monism evade both the conceivability and causal arguments?

The most serious objection to Russellian monism: the combination problem. This comes in two forms: the subject/subject combination problem for panpsychism, and the non-phenomenal/phenomenal combination problem for panprotopsychism. Why the combination problem raises doubts about whether Russellian monism really does avoid the conceivability argument in the end.