

P / R



Introducing P-worlds

Sometimes our words do us no favors. When people manifestly disagree on the meanings and associations of terms like “terrorist” or “mind”, it may be better to jettison those words if we wish to speak clearly.

In the thesis presented and developed on this website, I introduce a single distinction between the R-world, which is revealed to us through the equations of physicists, and the P-world, which is the subjective world of phenomenal existence. My focus will be on the nature of the P-world, and the things we might expect from a world with many co-existing P-worlds.

The P-world does not correspond to either mind or consciousness. It takes a little effort to delineate the P-world correctly. However the work is worthwhile. Once we have done so, very many consequences follow. These include new ways to think about our individual natures and our collective natures. It suggests new ways to approach the study of language. It helps in providing a meaningful definition of a “self” which mediates between the personal and the collective. There are many more potential lines of development too.

All these stem from the identification of the P-world as a well-formed entity. The distinction drawn here is a contribution to a growing debate about the relation between cognition and biology. Within that debate, there is a serious effort to understand our selves as natural phenomena. This is essential if we are to avoid the pitfalls of wishful thinking and self-caricature.

The body of understanding to which this contributes is a collective effort. There are many antecedents, and some of them may be found in the “Related Work” tab. Most of the time, however, I will endeavour to describe the single P/R distinction clearly and imaginatively, without complicating what is said by a dense network of references.

Feedback is strongly encouraged, and this website, which is a living document, will grow to encourage debate among those for whom this distinction appears to be useful.