

(1) The Problem of Qualia

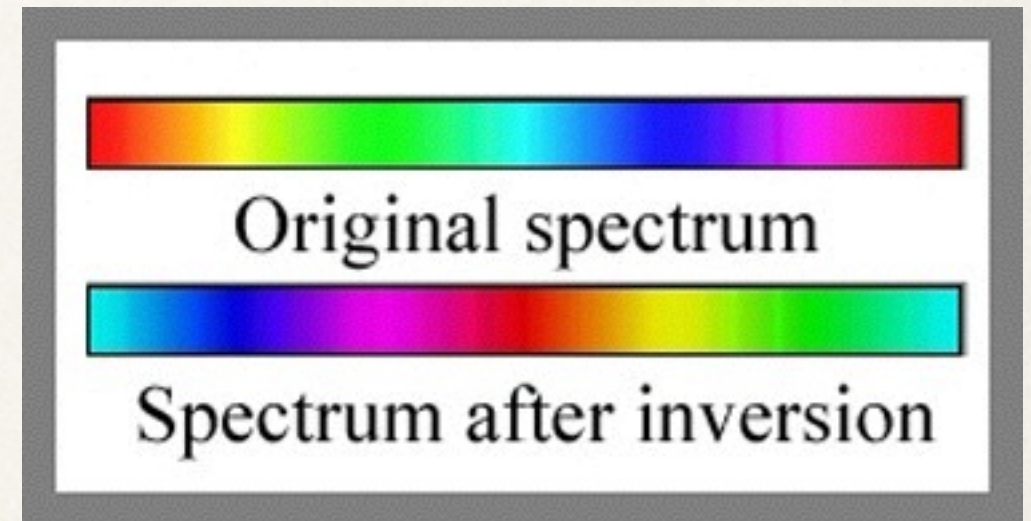
(2) The Problem of Self-Awareness

One challenge for the physicalist is to give a completely physical explanation for **qualia** (=the subjective state we are in when, for example, we see colors or experience pain)

Another challenge for the physicalist is to give a physical explanation of the fact that you are **self-aware** when you experience **qualia** in the sense that you are **aware that it is you having the experience.**

Why *Qualia* are Subjective

Imagine someone who sees colors according to a *color inverted spectrum*.



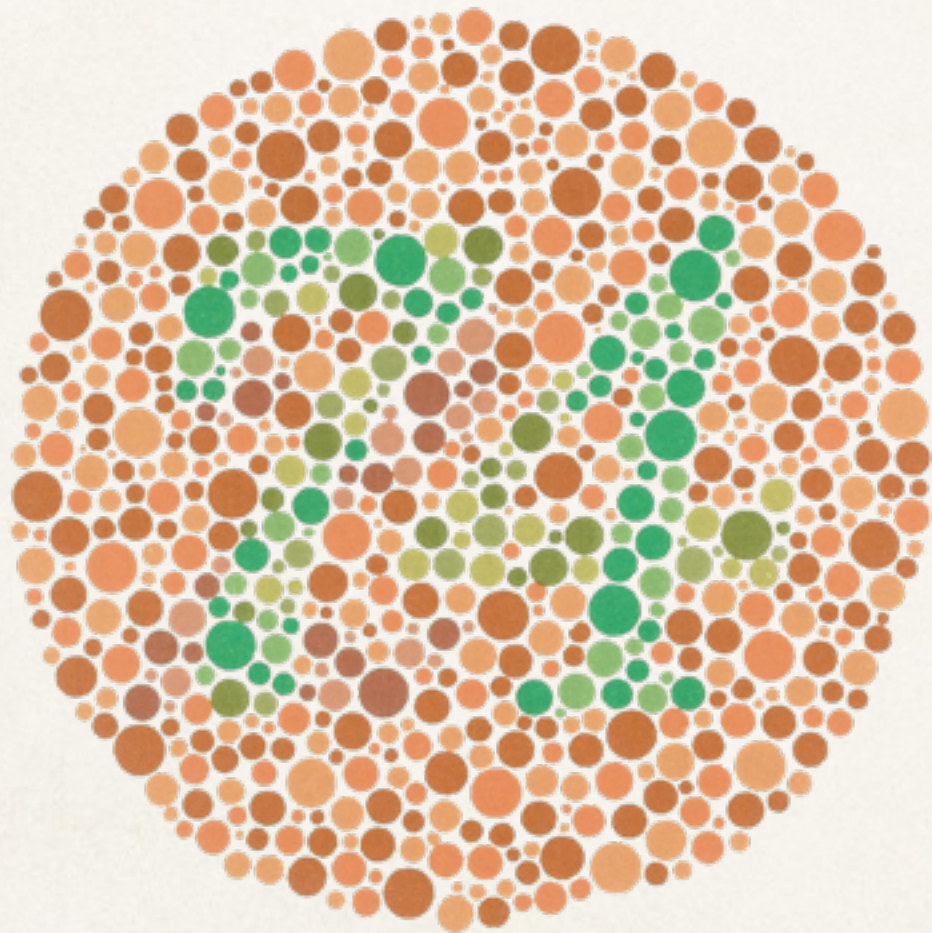
What Do You See When You Look at Bananas, Strawberries, Etc.?



Suppose you answer that what you see when you look at bananas and strawberries is what's on the left.

Does your answer show that your color spectrum is not inverted?

The Inverted Spectrum is Not Like Color Blindness



With normal vision one should be able to see the number 74. If not, one has some form of color blindness.

By contrast, there is no easy test that can tell us whether someone sees with the color inverted spectrum.

I Cannot Know How You See Colors

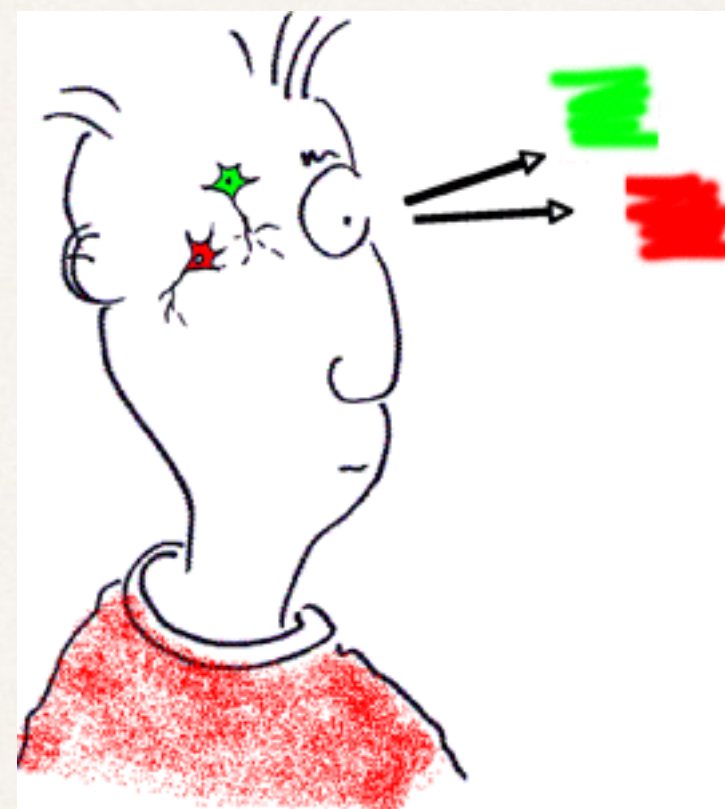


If your color spectrum is inverted, what you see on the left is what one without the inverted spectrum would see on the right. One with the inverted spectrum and one without the inverted spectrum would both say that bananas and strawberries look like what's on the left.

*Yet, the two people would have **different subjective experiences** when they see bananas and strawberries. The subjective experience of what it feels like to see a color is called **qualia**.*

The Challenge for the Physicalist

Based on just electrochemical activities and circuits in the brain, how can the physicalist give a completely physical explanation of **qualia**, for example, of the subjective experience of what it feels like to see the color red?



Ramachandran on the Two Problems (1) Qualia and (2) Self-Awareness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTWmTJALe1w&list=PLBF0905C888051EB7>



For Ramachandran,
the two problems are
closely connected, two
sides of the same coin.