

Functionalism

Read the article on functionalism, which you can download from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/>.

This is a great resource for all your philosophical needs. The articles are scholarly but not too long and very readable. Please do the following:

- Explain functionalism as it pertains to brains.
- Summarize the arguments for and against.
- The article ends on a very ambiguous note. Can you think of other arguments that might either strengthen or weaken the case for functionalism?
- Take a close look at the zombie argument. First note that philosophers' zombies – and there are a lot of them -- have nothing to do with Hollywood zombies. For one thing, they don't go around eating people. In fact, they behave just like everyone else – you might be a zombie yourself. Their defining feature is that they have no internal life, no consciousness, but they are functionally the same as you. This is often called a conceivability argument. To paraphrase the text slightly, you can conceive of a zombie, therefore functionalism is wrong because function alone is not enough to produce consciousness. Conceivability arguments – and there a lot of them too – are controversial. Do you find the zombie argument convincing or not? Why?