

Degrees of Consciousness

Is a human more conscious than an octopus? In the science of consciousness, it's oftentimes assumed that some creatures (or mental states) are more conscious than others. But in recent years, a number of philosophers have argued that the notion of degrees of consciousness is conceptually confused. I will (1) argue that the most prominent objections to degrees of consciousness are unsustainable, (2) develop an analysis of what it is for a degreed property to count as degrees of consciousness, and (3) apply the analysis to various theories of consciousness. I'll argue that whether consciousness comes in degrees depends on which theory of consciousness turns out to be correct. But I'll also argue that many—perhaps most—theories of consciousness entail that consciousness comes in degrees.