

Panpsychism, Emergence, and Russellian Monism

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Or: The Hegelian Argument for Panpsychism

The Hegelian Argument

Thesis: Physicalism

Antithesis: Dualism

Synthesis: Panpsychism

The Hegelian Argument

Thesis: The conceivability argument for dualism

Antithesis: The causal argument for physicalism

Synthesis: The Hegelian argument for panpsychism

Plan

*1. The Problem of Consciousness

2. Emergence

3. Panpsychism

4. Russellian Monism

5. The Combination Problem

The Problem of Consciousness

- What is the place of consciousness in nature?
- What is the relation between the physical and the phenomenal (the experiential)?

Physical and Phenomenal Truths

- Physical truths: microphysical truths in the language of fundamental physical theory
 - P = the complete microphysical truth.
- Phenomenal truths: truths about what it is like to be a conscious subject
 - Q = an arbitrary phenomenal truth.

The Conceivability Argument

1. $P \& \sim Q$ is conceivable [e.g., zombies]
2. If $P \& \sim Q$ is conceivable, $P \& \sim Q$ is possible.
3. If $P \& \sim Q$ is possible, physicalism is false.
4. Physicalism is false.

Other Epistemic Arguments

- The knowledge argument
 - Q is not deducible from P
- The explanatory argument
 - Q is not explicable in terms of P
- The structure/dynamics argument
 - P is just structure/dynamics, Q is not.

Options

- Type-A materialism: Denies the epistemological gap
- Type-B materialism: Accepts epistemological gap, denies ontological gap
- Dualism: Accepts ontological gap

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Emergence

- The concept of emergence is ambiguous between
 - Weak emergence [dominant in scientific tradition, e.g. complexity theory]
 - Strong emergence [dominant in philosophical tradition, e.g. British emergentists]

Weak Emergence

- Weak emergence:
 - high-level truths are surprising given low-level laws
 - but they are deducible in principle from low-level truths
- E.g. weather patterns, cellular automata, connectionist networks, flocks of birds.

Weak Emergentism

- Weak emergentism about consciousness
 - Consciousness weakly emergent from physical
 - Phenomenal truths surprising but deducible in principle.
 - Type-C materialism: Prima facie epistemic gap, not an in-principle epistemic gap

Against Weak Emergence

- Trouble: weak emergence from the microphysical always requires a structural/functional analysis of macro truths.
- This is implausible for the phenomenal.
- Collapses to functionalist type-A materialism.

Intermediate Emergence

- Intermediate emergence:
 - Phenomenal not deducible in principle from microphysical, but ontologically grounded in microphysical all the same.
- A version of type-B materialism: ideal epistemic gap, no ontological gap
 - Same problems: e.g. brute necessities.

Strong Emergence

- Strong emergence
 - High-level truths not deducible in principle from low-level truths
 - High-level properties are not ontologically grounded in low-level properties.
 - Instead they are new and fundamental.

Strong Emergentism about Consciousness

- Phenomenal properties strongly emergent from microphysical properties.
- Not deducible from or metaphysically necessitated by microphysical properties.
- Perhaps nomologically necessitated by microphysical properties.

Strong Emergence and the Fundamental

- Strong emergence requires new fundamental properties
 - fundamental phenomenal properties?
- and new fundamental laws
 - psychophysical laws, transordinal laws, laws of emergence

Strong Emergentism and Dualism

- Strong emergentism is a form of dualism
 - At least property dualism
 - Substance dualism iff there are strongly emergent individuals?
- As such, is subject to standard problems for dualism.

The Causal Argument for Physicalism

1. Phenomenal properties are causally relevant to the physical.
2. Every physical event has a physical sufficient cause.
3. If every physical event has a physical sufficient cause, any property causally relevant to the physical is physical.
4. Phenomenal properties are physical.

Epiphenomenalist Strong Emergence

- Epiphenomenalist strong emergence: denies premise I.
- Phenomenal properties are not causally relevant to the physical
- One-way psychophysical laws

Problems for Epiphenomenalism

- Problems for epiphenomenalism
 - counterintuitive
 - verbal reports not caused by consciousness
 - incompatible with knowledge of consciousness?

Interactionist Strong Emergence

- Interactionist strong emergence: denies premise 2.
- Some physical events have no sufficient physical cause, have a phenomenal cause.
- Two-way psychophysical laws
- Not just strongly emergent properties, but strongly emergent causation
- Strong downward causation

Problems for Interactionism

- Interactionist strong emergence denies causal closure of the microphysical
 - requires psycho-physical laws that interfere with physics
- Common objection: this is incompatible with physics
 - Although: quantum mechanical collapse?

The Irrelevance of Emergence

- Emergence does not fundamentally alter the standard physicalism/dualism dialectic.
- Weak emergentist views are materialist
- Strong emergentist views are dualist
- But these are subject to the standard worries for materialism and dualism.

Standoff

- We have a standoff:
 - The conceivability argument refutes physicalism
 - The causal argument refutes dualism and establishes physicalism.

Synthesis

- Physicalism & anti-physicalism: contradiction?
- Time for a Hegelian synthesis!

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Panpsychism as Synthesis

- The conceivability argument against physicalism does not refute panpsychism
- Neither does the causal argument for physicalism.
- So panpsychism is the Hegelian upshot?

Panpsychism

- Literal panpsychism: Everything has a mind
 - rocks, numbers, mereological sums?
- Standard panpsychism: Some fundamental physical entities have mental properties
 - e.g. quarks have experiences?

Microexperience and Macroexperience

- Macroexperience: human phenomenology (and non-human animal phenomenology?)
 - involves macrophenomenal properties
- Microexperience: phenomenology of fundamental microphysical entities
 - involves microphenomenal properties

Constitutive Panpsychism

- Constitutive panpsychism: Macroexperience is constituted by microexperience.
- Grounded in, metaphysically necessitated by...
- Nonconstitutive panpsychism: There is microexperience, but it does not constitute macroexperience.

Russell on Matter

- Russell (The Analysis of Matter):
 - Physics reveals the relational structure of matter, but not its intrinsic nature
 - Physical theory tells us what the mass role is, but it doesn't tell us what plays the mass role.
 - Maybe these have something to do with the mental?

Quiddities

- Quiddities = fundamental properties that are categorical bases of fundamental microphysical dispositions
- e.g. the intrinsic property that plays the mass role
- Q:What are quiddities?

Russellian Panpsychism

- Russellian panpsychism: (Some) quiddities are microphenomenal properties.
- e.g. microphenomenal property M plays the mass role, the charge role, ...
- M = “the intrinsic nature of mass”?
- NonRussellian panpsychism: there are microphenomenal properties, but they don't play these roles.

Are Quiddities Physical?

- Q: Are quiddities physical properties?
- A: This is a verbal issue.
 - Narrowly physical properties = physical role properties.
 - Broadly physical properties = physical role and realizing properties.
- Quiddities are broadly but not narrowly physical.

Is Panpsychism Physicalism?

- Narrow physicalism: All truths grounded in narrowly physical truths.
- Broad physicalism: All truths grounded in broadly physical truths.
- Constitutive Russellian panpsychism rejects narrow physicalism but can accept broad physicalism.

Constitutive Russellian Panpsychism

- Claim: The most important form of panpsychism is constitutive Russellian panpsychism
- Microphenomenal properties play microphysical roles and constitute human phenomenology
- Constitutive Russellian panpsychism evades both the conceivability and causal arguments.

Structural and Categorical Zombies

- Structural zombies = narrowly physical duplicates of humans without consciousness
- Duplicate the mass role.
- Categorical zombies = broadly physical duplicates of humans without consciousness
- Duplicate the mass role and the quiddities that play it.

Panpsychism and Conceivability

- Russellian panpsychist: When we conceive of zombies, we conceive structural zombies but not categorical zombies
 - Same structure, different quiddities (or no quiddities?).
- Structural zombies are conceivable?
- Categorical zombies are not.

Narrow and Broad Physicalism

- Structural zombies refute narrow physicalism
- Categorical zombies refute broad physicalism
- The conceivability argument establishes the possibility of structural but not categorical zombies.
- So constitutive Russellian panpsychism is left open.

Russellian Identity Theory

- Three (semantically different) versions of Russellianism
 - Russellian identity theory
 - Russellian realization theory
 - Russellian expansionism

Quiddities and Physical Properties

- Stoljar: T-physical properties = properties of physical theory: mass, charge, etc.
- [Strawson: “physics-al properties”]
- Say quiddity Q plays the mass role. Is it t-physical? Is it physical?

Russellian Identity Theory

- Russellian identity theory:
 - physical properties = t-physical properties
 - 'mass' = 'what plays the mass role'
- So mass = Q, Q is physical.
- Russellian physicalism!
- Even: Russellian physics-alism.

Russellian Realization Theory

- Russellian realization theory:
 - physical properties = t-physical properties
 - ‘mass’ = ‘the mass role’ (or ‘having a property that plays the mass role’)
- Then Q is not mass (though it realizes or grounds mass), Q is not physical.
- Russellian dualism!

Russellian Expansionism

- Russellian expansionism: physical properties =
 - o-physical properties [properties of all physical objects] (Stoljar)
 - natural properties (Strawson)
- Then even if Q is not a t-physical property, Q is a physical property.
- Russellian physicalism! But not Russellian physics-alism.

Panpsychism and Conceivability

- Zombies = physical duplicates without consciousness; roles without quiddities.
- Russellian realization theory: zombies are conceivable and possible
- Russellian identity theory: zombies are conceivable but not possible [2D]
- Russellian expansionism: zombies are not conceivable

Physicalism or Dualism?

- My view: These three materialist/dualist versions of Russellian panpsychism differ only verbally.
- The first two differ verbally over 'mass'. The third differs verbally over 'physical'.
- P = structure/dynamics, or structure/dynamics/quiddities.
- The substantive metaphysics is the same.
- Promising for a Hegelian synthesis!

Panpsychism and Physical Causation

- According to Russellian panpsychism, microphenomenal properties are causally relevant in microphysics.
- They serve as categorical bases of microphysical causation. Categorical bases are plausibly the ultimate causes.

Panpsychism and Mental Causation

- According to constitutive panpsychism, macroexperience is constituted by microexperience.
- Constituted properties typically inherit causal relevance of constituting properties.
- So given constitute Russellian panpsychism, macroexperience is causally relevant.

What About the Causal Argument?

1. Phenomenal properties are causally relevant to the physical.
2. Every physical event has a physical sufficient cause.
3. If every physical event has a physical sufficient cause, any property causally relevant to the physical is physical.
4. Phenomenal properties are physical.

Panpsychism and the Causal Argument

- Given Russellian physicalism, the conclusion is correct: microphenomenal properties are microphysical, macrophenomenal properties are macrophysical.
- Given Russellian dualism, premise 2 is incorrect: sufficient causes for physical effects involve nonphysical quiddities.
- [Or maybe premise 3: role is sufficient, but quiddities ground role]

Quiddities and Causal Relevance

- Either way: a full story about physical causation involves quiddities, and so involves experience.
- The causal argument fails if physicalism is narrow physicalism, but succeeds if physicalism is broad physicalism.

Hegelian Synthesis

- Conceivability argument establishes that consciousness is not narrowly physical.
- Causal argument establishes that consciousness is broadly physical.
- Synthesis: Consciousness is broadly physical but not narrowly physical.

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Russellian Monism

- Russellian monism: Consciousness is broadly physical but not narrowly physical.
- Constitutive Russellian panpsychism is one form of Russellian monism.
- But it is not the only kind.

Panprotopsychism

- Protophenomenal properties: intrinsic properties that are not phenomenal but that can constitute phenomenal properties (collectively, perhaps via relations).
- Panprotopsychism: Some fundamental entities have protophenomenal properties.

Constitutive Panprotopsychism

- Constitutive Russellian panprotopsychism: some quiddities are protophenomenal properties and constitute macrophenomenal properties.
- Issues regarding physicalism and dualism versions are as for the panpsychist version.

Disjunctive Conclusion

- Russellian monism requires that structure plus quiddities constitute consciousness, structure alone does not.
- Entails that quiddities are phenomenal or protophenomenal.
- (Constitutive Russellian) panpsychism or panprotopsyichism.
- The relation to physicalism and dualism is as with panpsychism.

Against Panprotopsychism?

- Some reject protophenomenal properties on the grounds that the nonexperiential cannot constitute the experiential.
 - Protophenomenal zombie argument?
 - Protophenomenal knowledge argument?
 - Protophenomenal explanatory argument?

Panprotopsychism II

- Q: Why accept these claims?
- In the arguments against physicalism, we had general reasons for thinking that nothing structural entails the experiential.
- There are no clear analogous reasons in arguments against panprotopsychism.

Panprotopsychism III

- We don't know what protophenomenal properties are, and don't have protophenomenal concepts.
- So we can't see how protophenomenal could ground the phenomenal.
- But this may just be (contingent) inability to imagine, not insight into necessity.

Against Panpsychism

- Most common argument against panpsychism: the incredulous stare.
- It's intuitively crazy to think that fundamental entities have experience.
- I think this has little force.
- But if one is moved by it, it has less force against panprotopsychism.

PP or PPP?

- My view: panpsychism and panprotopsychism are both open possibilities
- And are perhaps the views on the mind-body problem that hold the most promise.

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The Combination Problem

- The combination problem for panpsychism (James, Seager): how do microphenomenal properties constitute phenomenal properties?
- The biggest obstacle for panpsychism.

The Combination Problem II

- The combination problem for panprotopsychism (James, Seager): how do protophenomenal properties constitute phenomenal properties?
- The biggest obstacle for panprotopsychism?

Conceivability Argument against Panpsychism

- Panpsychist zombie = microphenomenal duplicate without macroexperience.
 1. Panpsychist zombies are conceivable.
 2. If panpsychist zombies are conceivable, they are possible.
 3. If panpsychist zombies are possible, constitutive panpsychism is false.
 4. Constitutive panpsychism is false.

The Conceivability Premise

- Why believe the conceivability premise?
- Epistemic gaps between microexperience and macroexperiences
 - No summing of subjects (James/Goff)
 - Structural mismatch (Stoljar)
 - Unity of consciousness

Solutions to the Combination Problem?

- Microphysical holism/entanglement (QM)
- High-level individuals (Rosenberg)
- Phenomenal binding (Goff)
- Phenomenal fusion (Seager)
- ...

Phenomenal Composition

- Challenge: We need a theory of phenomenal composition:
- How phenomenal properties collectively constitute other phenomenal properties.

Intrasubjective/ Intersubjective

- Worry: We (sort of) understand intrasubjective phenomenal composition.
- We don't understand intersubjective phenomenal composition, or even how intersubjective phenomenal composition is possible.

Combination Problem for Panprotopsychism

- Panprotopsychism may have more resources for solving the problem.
- It's not subject to the constraint that fundamental entities be subjects, or to the requirement of intersubjective composition
- Unknown protophenomenal qualities allow more degrees of freedom.

Panprotopsychism

- Phenomenal properties are plausibly complex properties
 - E.g. relations of awareness to qualities
- Panprotopsychism allows that these complex properties can be constituted by simple nonsubjective properties.

Challenge

- Distinctive challenge for panprotopsychism:
 - How can subjects be constituted by nonsubjects?
 - How can subjective properties be constituted by nonsubjective properties?
- These are hard problems, but maybe less hard than the corresponding problems for panpsychism.

Conclusion

- Panpsychism and panprotopsychism have challenges, but these arguably fall short of the principled problems for standard physicalism and dualism.
- Answering these challenges requires constructing a detailed explanatory theory.
- If such a theory can be constructed, it will constitute a solution to the mind-problem.

Onward

- Over to you...