

Panpsychism/Dual Aspect Monism

1. Two Hard Problems

The Hard Problem of Consciousness – The hard problem of consciousness is another way of bringing out the challenge consciousness poses to physicalism. It's not unrelated to the knowledge argument, but it focuses on *explanation*. The thought is, no amount of science will be able to explain why particles moving around in such and such way will give rise, to say, red experience.

The Hard Problem of Matter – What is physical matter in and of itself, beyond the structure described by physics?

Like the hard problem of consciousness, the hard problem of matter seems like a problem science can't solve.

2. The Hard Problem of Matter

Traditional scientific methods tell us what matter *does*, not what matter *is*. It describes the software, rather than the hardware of the universe.

Examples:

- What is charge? A matter of repelling other matter with the same charge and attracting other matter with different charge.
- What is mass? A matter of responding to applied forces, gravitationally attracting other particles with mass, curving spacetime, interacting with the Higgs field...

But we might want to know *what is it that's doing the attracting, curving the spacetime, interacting with the Higgs field?*

One proposal: structuralism – all there is is structure and relations. There's no *thing* which is the thing that realizes it. But, the argument goes, there are lots of abstract mathematical structures. Presumably the particular structure describing our universe differs from the other abstract structures because it's realized by some stuff.

3. Can we Solve Both Problems at Once?

The hard problem of matter calls for non-structural (qualitative) properties and consciousness is the one phenomenon we know that might provide us with some.

We know what conscious properties – qualia – are like *in and of themselves*, not just how they relate to other stuff: when Mary sees red for the first time she isn't learning anything about how the property of looking red relates to other things – she's learning what it's like.

So here's the proposed solution: perhaps consciousness of some primitive or rudimentary form *is* the hardware that the software physics describes runs on. Maybe fundamental particles are mental beings – streams of experience in physical relation to other streams of experience.

This is a proposed answer to the hard problem of matter. How does it purport to solve the hard problem of consciousness? If matter just is consciousness there is no question about how consciousness arises from matter.

4. Dual aspect monism

Monism – all of reality is made of the same kind of stuff.

Dualism – reality is made of two types of stuff

Dual aspect monism accepts that the brain is a purely material system, but says that it has an intrinsic nature which we can detect from the inside that can't be captured by any physical theory. It then proposes that we think of everything like this. All matter has an intrinsic mental nature.

5. Objections

Panpsychism – implausible that fundamental particles are conscious.

Response – look at the alternatives!

Combination problem – how does more complex consciousness arise out of simpler forms of consciousness? Looks similar to the original hard problem.

Response – they're working on it.

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