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Chalmers, "Consciousness and Its Place in Nature"

1. Intro
2. The easy problem and the hard problem
3. The typology
  - a. Reductive Materialism
    - i. Arguments against materialism
    - ii. Three types of materialism
  - b. Three types of non-reductionism
    - i. Two types of dualism
    - ii. One type of monism

NB: what Chalmers is doing is sketching "logical space": what are the moves and counter-moves, given a set of presuppositions? This is the inverse of Foucault's episteme, which goes from a set of "statements" (= serious candidates for truth value) to the rules that condition them.

1. Epistemic and ontological gap:
  - a. Type-A materialism: eliminativism / functionalism / behaviorism
    - i. No epistemic gap;
    - ii. Functions explain everything; no qualia
  - b. Type-B materialism: identity theory
    - i. Unclosable epistemic gap,
    - ii. But no ontological gap
  - c. Type-C materialism:
    - i. Epistemic gap at present
    - ii. But closable in principle / with advances in physics
2. Causal closure of the physical
  - a. Substance or Property dualisms
    - i. Type-D dualism: interactionism / emergentism
      1. No causal closure of physical
      2. And causal role for phenomenal properties
    - ii. Type-E dualism: epiphenomenalism:
      1. Causal closure of physical
      2. But no causal role for phenomenal properties
  - b. Monism
    - i. Type-F monism: neutral monism / panprotopsyichism:
      1. Causal closure of physical
      2. And causal role for phenomenal properties

## INTRODUCTION

1. Reductive materialism:

- a. cness = physical process;
  - b. no need to revise physicalist ontology
2. Non-reductive
- a. Cness = irreducibly (non-physical)
  - b. Requires expansion of physicalist ontology

Note the intra-mundane relation: the place of cness in nature: what kind of thing is cness. We can either change our notion of cness (making it physical) or our notion of nature (making it more than physical). But for the phenomenologist, cness is not a thing, but that which allows sense of world to be revealed / that which constitutes sense of world. So cness is transcendental: it is condition of possibility of a world that makes sense. So you can't use a founded concept – place in nature – to describe the founding condition.

### THE PROBLEMS

Easy problems: discriminate stimuli, report information, monitor internal states, control behavior. This is a puzzle rather than a mystery. No obvious obstacle to an eventual explanation of these phenomena in neurobiological or computational terms. – What we need here is explanation of functions or causal roles in production of behavior.

Hard problem: why is there experience, a subjective aspect? How does *phenomenal consciousness* come about? "Something it is like." Qualia. It seems that physical brain systems when properly organized "yield" experience. This is a mystery rather than a puzzle. – Here the question is not "how" but "why": why is performance of functions accompanied by experience? To answer this we need to explain relation of physical processes and phenomenal cness.

1. Reductive explanation uses only physical principles w/o appeal to cness.
  - A. Physicalist / materialist sees cness as physical
  - B. Nonmaterialist sees cness as non-physical even if associated w/ and explained by physical processes
2. Non reductionist: cness is part of explanation.

### THREE ARGUMENTS AGAINST MATERIALISM

1. The Explanatory Argument
  2. The Conceivability Argument
  3. The Knowledge Argument
1. The Explanatory Argument (can you explain qualia on basis of physics? = physical explanation is functional explanation but qualia are not functions)
    - a. Physical accounts explain structure and function
    - b. Explaining structure and function is not enough to explain cness

- i. Because cness includes qualia / phenomenal cness
    - c. Therefore, no physical account can explain cness
    - d. Since what cannot be explained physically is not physical
    - e. Therefore, materialism about cness is false
    - f. And, the natural world includes more than the physical world
  2. The Conceivability Argument (can you conceive lack of qualia on basis of physics?)
    - a. Zombies and / or inverts are conceivable
      - i. They are molecularly identical {3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective}
      - ii. But have no / different inner experience {1<sup>st</sup> person perspective}
    - b. Zombies are not actual, but they are possible
      - i. They can be conceived as existing in a possible world
      - ii. That is, they are not self-contradictory (logically possible); but are they metaphysically possible? (is there a difference?)
        1. Necessity = truth of proposition in all possible worlds
        2. Possibility = truth of proposition in some possible worlds
    - c. If zombies are possible, then [phenomenal] cness is not physical
      - i. Because zombies / inverts are physically identical to actual world counterparts
      - ii. And phenomenally different from their actual world counterparts
    - d. Therefore, phenomenal cness is non-physical
  3. The Knowledge Argument [can you deduce qualia on basis of physics?]
    - a. There are facts about cness that are not deducible from physical facts
    - b. The canonical argument here is about "Mary" the neuroscientist
      - i. Mary knows all the physical facts about color
      - ii. But she has never experienced color
      - iii. When she experiences color, does she gain new facts?
      - iv. If so, then there are facts about experience that are not physical facts
    - c. Another way to put this is with truths
      - i. Some cness truths are not deducible from physical truths
      - ii. If so, then materialism is false (bcs materialism says that there are only physical truths and truths deducible from them)
  4. Structure of the anti-materialist arguments
    - a. Establish an epistemic gap
    - b. And then infer an ontological gap = failure of metaphysical necessity,
      - i. Materialism holds that physics necessarily entails all truths
      - ii. But the epistemic gap shows that this necessity doesn't obtain
        1. You cannot explain non-functional qualia from functionalist physics
        2. You can conceive of lack of qualia despite physical identity
        3. You cannot deduce knowledge of qualia from physics knowledge
      - iii. Therefore materialism is not metaphysically necessary
  5. Transition (top graf on 251): materialist responses
    - a. Type A: denies relevant epistemic gap
    - b. Type B: accepts unclosable epistemic gap, but denies ontological gap
    - c. Type C: accepts deep epistemic gap, but thinks it will eventually be closed

TYPE-A MATERIALISM [there is no epistemic gap / functionalism or behaviorism]

6. Denies epistemic gap
  - a. No hard problem of moving from 3<sup>rd</sup> person physics to 1<sup>st</sup> person qualia
  - b. No zombie conceivability
  - c. No truths that Mary gains (she might gain an ability, but not facts)
7. People (note 11): Armstrong, Dennett, Dretske, Harman, Lewis, Rey, Ryle
8. Forms
  - a. Eliminativist: cness does not exist / there are no phenomenal truths
  - b. Analytic behaviorism / functionalism:
    - i. We have functional cness (A-cness in Block's terms)
    - ii. But no P-cness
  - c. "Nothing to see here, move on":
    - i. You have only to explain functions
    - ii. Even if you are a human biology chauvinist: those explanations stick too close to neurobiology to be functionalists who accept multiple realizability
9. Problem: you have to deny the obvious, that we have experience / qualia
10. Arguments:
  - a. By analogy to previous scientific successes in which explaining functions was enough
  - b. By analogy to previous scientific advances that closed an epistemic gap
  - c. By appealing to the unpalatable nature of dualism
  - d. By appeal to an intermediate X the functional explanation of which also explains phenomenal cness
    - i. For example, representation:
      1. Cness is representational and we can explain representations functionally
      2. But this rests on an ambiguity in "representation"
        - a. Yes, there are functional representations: system responds to an object
        - b. But there is also phenomenal representation: when a system has a conscious experience of an object
  - e. By claiming to physically explain our beliefs about cness
    - i. But this presupposes that beliefs can be functionally analyzed
    - ii. And that this 3<sup>rd</sup> person explanation of a disposition to talk about cness in a certain way is sufficient
    - iii. But does this cover the 1<sup>st</sup> person experience?
11. Bottom line: most philosophers have an intuition that we have P-cness that cannot be explained functionally, and they argue by rebutting counterarguments against that intuition

TYPE-B MATERIALISM [there is an epistemic gap, but no ontological gap; identity theory]

12. The 3 arguments
  - a. Conceivability: zombies are conceivable but not metaphysically possible

- b. Knowledge: Mary lacks phenomenal facts, but they relate to physical reality
  - c. Explanatory: hard problem does not relate to a distinct ontological realm
13. People (note 15): Block and Stalnaker, Hill, Levine, Loar, Lycan, Papineau, Perry, Tye
14. Identity theories
- a. Like identity between H<sub>2</sub>O and water:
    - i. Different concepts (so not discovered by conceptual analysis)
    - ii. But we discover empirically that they refer to same thing
  - b. So cness and functional roles are different concepts but refer to same thing
15. Problems
- a. Character of epistemic gap w/ cness is different from that in other domains
  - b. Arguments
    - i. Explanatory: you can explain water by explaining its structure / behavior
    - ii. Knowledge: you can deduce truths about water from physical facts
    - iii. Conceivability: you cannot conceive a physically identical world w/o water
16. Epistemic primitiveness
- a. Identity btw genes and DNA is not epistemically primitive; it can be deduced from physics – if you know the facts and laws you can figure out that DNA is responsible for variation and heredity
  - b. But identity of cness and physical / functional states is not epistemically primitive; you cannot deduce it (that would be Type-A)
  - c. Now usually, epistemic primitiveness is mark of a fundamental law
    - i. So Type-B wants to have epistemic law but ontological identity
    - ii. But this is cheating: identities are usually explained, not primitive
  - d. So if you want cness and physics to be fundamental law
    - i. Then cness and physics are separate
    - ii. Because fundamental laws connect separate properties
    - iii. But that is non-reductive
  - e. What Type-B does is to take primitive connection of cness and physics
    - i. And make that into an identity
    - ii. But that is only to preserve a prior commitment to materialism
17. Responses

#### TYPE-C MATERIALISM [epistemic gap that is closeable in principle]

18. The arguments
- a. Conceivability: zombies are now conceivable but won't be when we know more
  - b. Knowledge: Mary will be able to know the phenomenal from better knowledge of the physical
  - c. Explanatory: we will eventually be able to solve hard problem
19. People: Nagel, Churchland, Van Gulick, McGinn
20. Inherent instability of Type-C
- a. It collapses into Type-A or B materialism; Type-D dualism; or Type-F monism
  - b. Type-A: we will come to see that explaining functions explains everything (there is no further explanandum; hence there is no epistemic gap)
  - c. Constraints on closing epistemic gap

- i. Physics describes structure and dynamics
    - ii. From these, can only deduce further truth about structure and dynamics
    - iii. Truths about cness are not truths about structure and dynamics
  - d. Discussion
    - i. Dynamics
    - ii. Structure
- 21. Basic problem: going from A to B requires a "conceptual hook"
  - a. So for instance, with life, functions connect physics and biology
  - b. But there is no functionality in common btw phenomenal cness and structural-dynamic physics

INTERLUDE: three options; speculative; but no obvious flaws

- 22. Type-D dualism (interactionism): deny causal closure of the physical: there are causal gaps in physics filled by causal role for phenomenal properties
- 23. Type-E dualism (epiphenomenalism): accept causal closure of the physical and deny causal role for phenomenal properties
- 24. Type-F monism (neutral monism; pan-proto-psychism): accept causal closure of the physical, but also accept causal role for phenomenal properties, bcs they constitute intrinsic nature of physical

TYPE-D DUALISM (interactionism; upward and downward causality)

- 25. Ontological commitments
  - a. Substance dualism: Descartes
  - b. Property dualism
    - i. One substantial type but with physical and psychical properties
    - ii. Compatible with Broad's emergentism
      - 1. Phenomenal properties are ontologically novel emergences
      - 2. From properly arranged material systems
      - 3. Issue of "downward causation"
- 26. Objections
  - a. No causal nexus:
    - i. But Hume shows phenomena are connected by fundamental laws
    - ii. Why not for fundamental psychophysical laws?
  - b. Incompatible with physics
    - i. Incompatible with causal closure of the physical
      - 1. But psycho-physical effects have not been ruled out by experiment
      - 2. You could come up with a psychical force to extend physics
    - ii. But is it really incompatible? What about collapse in quantum mechanics?

TYPE-E DUALISM (epiphenomenalism: only one-way "upward" causality)

- 27. Objections:
  - a. Seems deeply counter-intuitive; but there is no direct evidence against it
  - b. It could be just an illusion, a mere belief

- c. How could it have evolved? Well, NS selects for the physical and the mental comes along for the ride
  - d. Doesn't knowledge of X imply a causal connection between X and beliefs?
28. Seems inelegant; a fractured view of nature with weak integration of physical and phenomenal properties; counter-intuitive

TYPE-F MONISM (neutral monism; panprotopsychism)

29. Phenomenal properties are located at fundamental physical level

30. Russell:

- a. Physics deals only with relations
- b. It says nothing about intrinsic nature of entities
- c. We have direct knowledge of phenomenal properties qua intrinsic
  - i. Phenomenalism: perhaps intrinsic properties of physical world *are* phenomenal properties
  - ii. Protophenomenalism: Or, perhaps intrinsic properties of physical world *constitute* phenomenal properties

31. Tight integration

- a. Physics comes from the relations of basic entities
- b. Phenomenality from the intrinsic nature of basic entities

32. Metaphysical position

- a. Materialism: protophenomenal properties are physical properties
- b. Dualism: duality between
  - i. Structural-dispositional properties described by physics
  - ii. Intrinsic protophenomenal properties responsible for cness
- c. Neutral monism: neutral protophenomenal properties
  - i. Same as above
    - 1. Physics via their relations
    - 2. Cness via their intrinsic nature
  - ii. Idealism: mental properties constitute physical properties
  - iii. Panpsychism: phenomenal properties at fundamental level

33. The 3 arguments against materialism

- a. Conceivability:
- b. Knowledge
- c. Explanatory

34. Objections

- a. Counter-intuitive
- b. Ignorance
  - i. Of protophenomenal properties
  - ii. And of how they constitute phenomenal properties
- c. Combination problem
  - i. How do microphysical (proto)phenomenal properties
  - ii. Relate to our (mostly unified) phenomenal experience?

CONCLUSION