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Consciousness and its Place in Nature: Does Physicalism Entail Panpsychism? Galen Strawson [Anthony Freeman, Editor]. Exeter, United Kingdom: Imprint Academic, 2006, 250 pages, $34.90 paperback.[1]

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This collection of papers, *Consciousness and its Place in Nature: Does Physicalism Entail Panpsychism?*, edited by Anthony Freeman presents seventeen responses to Galen Strawson's keynote paper which claims that the only plausible way to be a real physicalist is to accept that the intrinsic properties of the physical are experiential (phenomenal) in character, i.e., the doctrine of panpsychism. The book concludes with Strawson's reply to these responses.

This "real physicalism" is, according to Strawson, the only way of dealing with what Chalmers (1996) calls the "hard problem of consciousness." This problem lies in the fact that the experiential nature of our conscious experience is a puzzling phenomenon for the materialist. It is of an apparently fundamentally different nature from the rest of the physical world, hence the problem of integrating it into a satisfactory naturalistic world-picture.[2]

Reductive Physicalism and Eliminativism

That this constitutes a problem is however itself controversial. A standard physicalist response has it that there is no particularly hard problem here, and that the progress made in fields like neurophysiology, cognitive science and robotics, provide tools for the construction of promising theories showing how experiential properties are just functional features of physical systems such as ours. This is a reductive physicalist response, and it is represented here by papers by William Lycan, Georges Rey, David Rosenthal, and John Smart. At its most extreme, it leads to the claim that the

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[1]The full list of authors and paper titles is given at the end of this review. In the text, references to these papers are given without the year.

[2]Strawson insists on including experience in his definition of the physical world, i.e., he defines the physical as all that is concrete. This definition is based upon a natural type of which tables, atoms, and experiences are representatives.

phenomenal nature of our conscious experience is just an illusion: this is straight eliminativism (Churchland's 1986 views are a paradigmatic example of eliminativism with respect to psychology: as Rey reminds us, "Churchland argued that 'psychology is just a degenerate research program'" p. 114).

Strawson has no time for this type of response: he argues that claims such as Churchland's involve a denial of the reality of experience, and this is nothing less than "the strangest thing that has ever happened in the whole history of human thought" (p. 5). Rey, in his paper, confirms the extent to which the eliminativist response leads to doing away with what was to be explained in the first place, as he confides that "I and a few others are prepared to conclude . . . . that there really are no phenomena answering to our usual concepts of qualia, consciousness and experience" (p. 113). Against Dennett's (1991) idea that there could be something illusory about our experiential concepts, Strawson points out in a footnote that "for there to seem to be rich phenomenology or experience just is for there to be such phenomenology or experience" (p. 6).

In the discussion between Strawson and the reductive physicalist and eliminativist positions, one feels that the apparent stale-mate which is reached here is due to the fact that they are not talking about the same thing. Although we have an intuitive understanding of what experience involves, Rosenthal claims that it is not only available for first-person, but also for third-person access. This view is based upon empirical evidence that "qualitative states occur without being conscious" (p. 119), e.g., states which amount to the priming for perceptual recognition by reflecting differences in colour. If this is the case, then one can gain third-person access to states for which there is only first-person access when they are conscious. Apart from the questionable assumption that such states' becoming conscious does not alter their qualitative character, the very idea of a non-conscious qualitative state is however very suspicious. To the objection that it is plausibly possible to account for such states' priming abilities by referring only to non-mental or physiological mechanisms, Rosenthal just answers (p. 120) that there is no reason to interpret them in this way. Well, is there any reason not to? Each party seems to think the ball is in the other camp — again a stale-mate arises.

The impression that both parties are not really talking the same language gains in plausibility when one considers a central claim Strawson makes for the nature of experiential properties. This is his adoption of the astrophysicist Eddington's (p. 10) observation that the only intrinsic properties we have access to, are those of our conscious experience. Eddington contrasts this with the relational nature of the properties identified by physics and other sciences. Many of the respondents agree with Strawson that experiential qualities are the only known instantiation of intrinsic properties. This would seem to provide a solid anchoring for the claim there is a hard problem insofar as we have a stark duality of types of properties.

But insofar as Rey agrees that there is something intrinsic about experiential concepts, he is inclined to think there is "something wrong" about them (p. 113), while Rosenthal disputes the claim that physics deals only with relational properties (p. 123). These authors develop theories which view introspection as providing us with unreliable "data" that is of little use, but one might ask whether they are then addressing the "hard problem" at all. After all, the question was about these very "data." To question the phenomenon one is supposedly trying to explain might be appropriate if one is dealing with ghosts or UFOs, but in the case of something of which we have an *immediate* grasp and through which all knowledge of the world is ultimately conveyed seems to warrant the kind of amazement that Strawson feels at the "capacity of human mind to be gripped by theory" (p. 5).

Emergence

For Strawson, the only option for a serious reductive proposal (i.e., one which does not flirt with eliminativism) would be a physical "explanation" of the experiential as an emergent phenomenon. Although the notion is not defined precisely, it is best understood by the standard example of how the movement of molecules of H_2O relative to one another gives rise to the phenomenon of liquidity. The individual molecules are not liquid, but when they move in certain ways, they constitute a liquid. The problem then becomes that of how it is possible for this notion of emergence to be used to explain the existence of experiential properties.

Strawson demands that there be "something about the nature of the emerged-from (and nothing else) in virtue of which the emerger emerges as it does and is what it is" (p. 15). This he refers to as a notion of "intelligibility to God," thus avoiding epistemological requirements of intelligibility as in his previous work (Strawson, 1994). Strawson considers different candidates for an analogy to the purported emergence of the experiential from the non-experiential which could help us grasp how such emergence is possible. He considers how one might claim that extension could arise from the non-extended, but rightly rejects this as impossible in a proper realist metaphysics (p. 16), and deals in the same way with the possibility of spatial properties emerging from non-spatial ones (p. 17). Strawson concludes that such emergence is impossible.

Simons would rather adopt a more cautious approach to the possibility of an emergent account of the experiential in terms of the non-experiential, preferring to observe that, "it would I think be presumptuous to suppose that because we are currently unable to see how the emergence might work, that there can be no natural emergence" (p. 148). And indeed Coleman's (p. 45) and Stoljar's criticisms (p. 174) suggest that Strawson is equivocating over whether the intelligibility he requires is intelligibility to God or to us. If the first, then it would seem that what we feel able to grasp is not the issue here; if the latter, then we can probably not say much, as Simons claims. Ultimately, it seems that Strawson's case for a lack of intelligibility of emergence is strongest when it is based upon the intrinsic nature of the phenomenal and the extrinsic nature of the properties established by physics and other sciences, and we shall return to this point below.

Non-reductive Physicalism

The discussion above stressed the issue of whether or not the opponents in the debate are talking about the same "thing." This suggests that one focus upon the existence of a gap between the concepts deployed in descriptions of the world in terms of the sciences, and the concepts of experience, i.e., the epistemological gap. Among those physicalists who recognise this gap, the non-reductive physicalists want to differentiate such a gap from a metaphysical issue, and thus introduce a wedge between the Strawsonian and reductive physicalist options. The metaphysical issue is a discrepancy between the nature of the phenomenal and that of reality as described by the "physical" sciences.[3]

[3]Importantly, as Carruthers and Schechter correctly note (pp. 33–34), Strawson does not follow the anti-physicalist strategy pursued by Chalmers (1996) which consists in identifying a metaphysical gap. The reason, as we shall see below, is that Strawson does not recognise the possibility of a complete description of any aspect of reality in terms of what the "physical" sciences have to offer. On the contrary, for Chalmers (1996), such a description is well suited to all but phenomenal consciousness, and hence, there is a gap in that "more" needs to be done to describe the reality of the phenomenal.

As Carruthers and Schechter (p. 34) point out, the move from the epistemological to a metaphysical issue is not automatic, and this point is particularly pertinent in view of Strawson's equivocating, as we noted above, between emergence which is intelligible to us (epistemological issue) and to God (metaphysical issue). Carruthers, Papineau, and Schechter argue that there is only a gap at the level of our concepts i.e., only an epistemological problem here.

The epistemological gap they recognise is generally between concepts of the experiential and non-experiential, rather than between concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic properties (Lycan, p. 68), and it is therefore easier to see how one might query that this gap points to a metaphysical problem. What the non-reductive physicalist is therefore proposing is a form of *brute emergence*, i.e., one which is not perspicuous to us (Coleman, p. 47). Different arguments are put forward for such a position, but the key points are: (1) that there is no reason to expect that we should have a grasp of how the experiential emerges from the non-experiential, (2) if we do expect this, it is because of the nature of phenomenal concepts which are claimed by some (Chalmers, 1996; Jackson, 1998) to pick out their referents directly (Papineau, p. 102); but in fact, "there is no such thing as unmediated reference" (Papineau, p. 105).[4]

The issue can be reformulated in terms of the two-dimensional semantic framework set up by Chalmers (1996). For Chalmers, a term like "water" has two intensions, both of which are described in terms of possible worlds. The first corresponds broadly to the Fregean sense of the term, i.e., the description used to pick out the referent. Here, this is "transparent, liquid, drinkable, etc.," and therefore the primary intension picks out substances which are liquid, transparent, drinkable, . . . in all possible worlds (considered as actual). To get the secondary intension, the reference is fixed in the actual world, i.e., as H_2O, and counterfactual possible worlds are now considered. In these, the term water picks out substances which have the chemical composition H_2O. In the case of phenomenal properties, Chalmers claims that the primary intension is identical in all possible worlds, and that the secondary intension is entirely determined by it. This intension to which the subject has privileged internal access and which is independent of how anything else happens to be is what the externalist questions.

As a result, a standard strategy for the non-reductive physicalist is to deny that an explanation of phenomenal consciousness requires an a priori account of how physical properties give rise to experience. Rather, science will reveal that experiential properties are identical to certain physical/functional properties. This will amount to brute emergence insofar as no further understanding of it will be available.

Ultimately, this view is based upon a faith in physicalism, as reflected in statements like Papineau's: "I am happy to say that scientific terms 'can fully capture the nature or essence of experience'" (p. 106). Such statements are fine as an attempt to rescue physicalism in the light of a recognition of the hard problem, but stronger reasons would seem to be needed to abandon our intuition that we have a privileged epistemic relation to the phenomenal properties of our experience.

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[4]Papineau argues that even if we want to have some form of direct reference, this does not guarantee transparency, on an externalist theory of content (pp. 102–103).

No Zombies?

If Strawson's position accentuates the irreducibility of the experiential to the non-experiential, he does not however endorse the conceivability of zombies who would be identical to us in all their physical/functional attributes, but would not have any phenomenal experience. These "Australian zombies" as Strawson refers to them, are hastily dismissed in a footnote (p. 22), but this is an issue that would have warranted more development given the volume of literature devoted to the issue. If one accepts that neuroscience could account for our cognitive and behavioural abilities, then its not being able to explain the phenomenal nature of consciousness means that one could make sense of a being with all the cognitive and behavioural abilities we have, but without the experiential dimension of consciousness. Most of those who reject reductive physicalism or eliminativism accept the premise that neuroscience could account for our cognition/behaviour, and therefore accept the conceivability of zombies, on a standard understanding of the distinction between what Block (1995) calls "access consciousness" (cognition) and "phenomenal consciousness" (the experiential).

But Strawson does not want to accept this premise because he sees experience as profoundly integrated with what we call the physical, so much so that it forms one natural kind with it, which he calls the Physical (I use a capital for his understanding of the word, p. 4). He thus tells us that he endorses the view held by many physicalists, that experience is "really just neurons firing" (p. 7), but that he understands something else in that description. This is because he thinks that there is a lot more to neurons than physics or neuroscience could ever account for.

This different use of the word "neuron" follows from his different use of the word "physical." It is not particularly helpful, as McGinn (p. 91) points out, and I think this is in large part responsible for a serious tension in Strawson's position which Stoljar underscores (pp. 174–175). Stoljar is enthused by Strawson's notion of the Physical, as it is congenial to his own idea (Stoljar, 2006) of a broader category that would encompass the experiential and the non-experiential (p. 176). However, he correctly points out that Strawson's argument against the possibility of some explanation of the experiential in terms of the non-experiential, relies upon there being an unbridgeable dichotomy of these two domains (p. 174). But this assumes one knows that the physical is definitely not the same kind of thing as the experiential, while at the same time Strawson is chiding philosophers who claim they know that what is referred to as physical reality in one sense may not also be experiential in another (p. 4).

Stoljar wants to emphasise this tension and call it a contradiction (p. 175), as it is congenial to his "absorbative physicalism" (it absorbs the phenomenal into a larger domain potentially describeable by "physical" science, i.e., physics, chemistry, neurobiology, etc.). This is however because he ignores the different senses in which Strawson claims that one *does* and *does not* know enough about the Physical. (1) We do not know enough about concrete reality to exclude the possibility that the physical is intimately linked with the experiential. (2) We do know enough about the notion of "the physical" defined by what "physical" science deals with, to know it could not explain the experiential. Stoljar, who accepts (1) but not (2), sees a contradiction in claiming both. But Strawson has more to say about why we should accept (2). This is the point made above, that experiential properties are intrinsic, while "physical" science only deals with extrinsic, relational properties.

But, if Strawson accepts (2), it seems he should also accept the existence of beings with neurons, as described by "physical" science, firing, but not endowed with any experiental properties. And are such beings not zombies?

Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Properties

If Strawson does not endorse the conceivability of zombies, it is because he would question the very cogency of a world described in terms of extrinsic (here, physical) properties only. To this, an objector might add that he is happy to add some causally inert intrinsic property X to the description of the particles making up the zombie, as long as it is non-experiential. And this would still be a zombie (albeit maybe not Australian!).

This point raises important issues about the nature of intrinsicality that Seager discusses in detail. He examines radical relationism, i.e., the claim that there are only relational properties (pp. 140–142). Among the problems he finds with such a position, there is the intuition that relations require relata that can be individuated. Moreover, if one isolates an individual thing, this must have some properties, and these cannot be relational if it is now isolated. Finally, and most importantly, what could radical relationism make of the intrinsic nature of phenomenal properties? And here, Seager adds some interesting insights into why we should not doubt the intrinsic nature of consciousness, by reminding us of James's (1890/1950) point that the unity of consciousness is not obtained by simple aggregation, i.e., through relations of parts.

This provides us strong (if not overwhelming) grounds for rejecting radical relationism. But what of the objector's point above? What of the zombie with particles of intrinsic nature X. To assess that, we have to get clearer about the relation between intrinsic and extrinsic properties. Seager shows that Strawson in effect endorses at least a weak version of the Leibnizian principle that extrinsic properties are *determined* by intrinsic properties (p. 131). This is because he wants the intrinsic experiential nature of the fundamental particles to provide a *causal* explanation of how brains can be the locus of consciousness. This is why Strawson goes beyond simple agnosticism about the intrinsic nature of the material world (p. 135). Together with considerations of parsimony and symmetry of the theory, this leads to making the move to *panpsychism*, i.e., the claim that the intrinsic nature of all matter is experiential. Insofar as causal properties of the physical are thereby logically dependent upon the experiential, zombies are logically impossible. This is where Strawson's theory parts with the kind of panpsychism that a property dualist like Chalmers (1996) could accept as a fellow property dualist.

Strawson and the History of Philosophy

Is Strawson's approach then unique? Skrbina (p. 153) describes Strawson's position as a dual-aspect monism, an approach he sees as harking back to Spinoza: there is one substance in the world, but with two types of properties, physical from the "outside," and mental from the "inside." This metaphysical picture is however broad and does not entail panpsychism. Indeed, as Wilson shows (p. 179), Spinoza implied that "one had to be a fairly complex entity of a certain degree of maturity" to be endowed with consciousness. In a sense, Skrbina's and Wilson's papers are complementary. The one examines the extent to which certain philosophers can be viewed as displaying the spirit of the panpsychism Strawson subscribes to, while Wilson focuses upon the letter of their doctrines and how this relates to Strawson's claims. This leads to a tendency to excess in both cases: Skbina seems to indulge in name-dropping, enlisting Schopenhauer, Royce, Pierce among the panpsychists, and listing "virtually all the pre-Socratics, Plato (arguably), Aristotle, the Stoics, ...

Leibniz, Diderot, Nietzsche, etc." among those who "have held to some version of panpsychism" (p. 152). Wilson, on the other hand, introduces us to the complexities of the interpretation of Leibniz's panpsychism, a theory that seems quite close to Strawson's, but that commentators find difficult to reconcile with Leibniz's monadology. This is interesting, but one feels that it involves going to a level of detail that is not warranted by Strawson's claim that his proposal is "made at a very high level of generality" (p. 28). Wilson however raises the important point that although consciousness as we find it is always connected with the ability for agency (p. 181), Strawson says nothing about "animation." In a footnote (p. 260), Strawson simply replies that he is happy to attribute "animation" to his ontological ultimates.

Strawson and Descartes

Strawson's response to the many papers that comment upon his thesis goes far beyond what one might expect to round off such a collection of papers. In seeking to give a historical underpinning to his views, he draws upon "the magnificent, contumacious Descartes" (p. 199). Descartes may seem an unlikely ally as he is the figurehead of substance dualism. To enlist his support, Strawson first clarifies his metaphysical revisionism vis-à-vis the distinction substance–property. Largely in reply to Macpherson's proposal to classify him as a property dualist (p. 81), Strawson develops a critique of the object/property distinction (pp. 193–199). Dispensing with a distinct notion of substance, Strawson views "concrete objects are nothing but concrete instantiations of properties" (p. 195). This finds support in Descartes's own writings: "the attributes [of a substance], when considered collectively, are indeed identical with the substance" (Descartes 1648/1976, p. 15; Strawson, p. 205). Descartes is thus best viewed as a "property dualist" (p. 207), which puts him in the same category as Chalmers, or Goff in this book.

But further, Strawson asks whether Descartes is an "ontological property dualist," i.e., whether the properties of being physical and experiential are "mutually exclusive in such a way that the being . . . of one of them cannot be the same thing as the being . . . of the other?" (p. 209). According to Strawson and many other commentators, Descartes develops a flawed a priori argument for the claim that there is such a real distinction between the experiential and the physical. But Strawson claims that there are many indications in his writings that "Descartes acknowledges the possibility that physicalism, i.e., real physicalism, may be true" (p. 212). This would mean that Descartes is "open to being a realistic monist" (p. 213), which is particularly congenial to Strawson's own approach. But as he himself admits, "textual evidence can be brought against this proposal" (p. 215).

How Broad is the Range of Responses?

If this locates Strawson's theory with respect to our Western philosophical tradition, some may feel like criticising this collection of papers for drawing exclusively upon "Western" approaches to thinking, and contemporary views from within the "analytic" tradition. In connection with the second point, one is reminded of how narrow-mindedly some analytic philosophers used to approach works produced within other traditions, when one reads Smart. His swipe at a "school of unintelligible German philosophers" (p. 159), when he discusses the term "phenomenology" speaks volumes. The selection of papers in this book could however hardly be

accused of being too narrow. Rather, it reflects who is currently involved in this particular debate. And the inclusion of a paper that deals with the quantum theoretic approach is welcome.

Stapp (p. 165) essentially disagrees with Strawson's claim that it is "obviously" wrong to claim that the nature or essence of experience cannot be captured by physics. Stapp uses von Neumann's interpretation of quantum theory in which the evolution of physical states is described by two processes. One is rule-governed by extensions of laws of classical physics, and the other is not. This is where the conscious experimenter, observing a previously closed system alters its state, leading to a non-continuous alteration of this state (collapse of the probability wave). Stapp wants to extend this model to the case of the brain/body and the conscious mind of a subject (p. 167). He does not, however, further discuss the transition from an external observer/observed system pair to the conscious subject/brain pair. The observer is however not "outside" it, and in what sense is the subject an observer? Aside from these specific issues, there is the broader question of the extent to which Stapp's theory of reality involves a characterisation of states in epistemological terms. This mingling of ontology and epistemology would seem to require an understanding of the notion of reality which differs from that assumed by most physicalists, a point I shall return to below.

Setting out Strawson's Considered View

Strawson's closing paper is important in that it fleshes out the position sketched in his opening paper in the light of responses to it. His key claims are, first a rejection of the Cartesian intuition, i.e., the belief that "experiential reality cannot possibly *be* physical reality" and vice-versa (p. 226). Nevertheless, he recognises the apparent necessity of holding on to the claim that "experiential reality cannot be non-experiential reality" and vice-versa. The second claim is monist: "there is only one kind of stuff in reality" (p. 221). These two claims, sit uncomfortably with the fundamental duality thesis: "There is experiential reality. There is non-experiential reality" (p. 231), whereby if some part of it needs to be abandoned, Strawson reminds us, *pace* the elimativist, that it has to be the existence of non-experiential reality (p. 231). Strawson sees it as his task to examine how these claims can be reconciled.

In so doing, he needs to clarify the conditions under which a reconciliation of the above claims could proceed satisfactorily. Emergence, is clearly not the way forward, as Strawson reiterates the claim he made in his opening paper, but which was criticised by a number of respondents, namely that "Experiential reality cannot possibly emerge from wholly and utterly non-experiential reality" and vice versa (pp. 231–232). On the other hand, any acceptable grasp of the nature of reality has to give pride of place to the nature of its ultimate constituents, so that "all non-ultimate facts are (fully) determined by" facts about these ultimate constituents, a claim which Coleman identifies as central to Strawson's argument (p. 40).

Given these clarifications, the reconciliation of the claims Strawson makes would seem to lead to a thesis which he calls *fundamental duality monism*. That is, given that the solution cannot involve emergence, the one kind of stuff of which the ultimate constituents of reality are made up of must both be experiential reality, and be non-experiential reality (pp. 235–236). Is this however a tenable position given the fact that experiential reality cannot be non-experiential reality? Drawing upon Spinoza, Strawson thinks it might be, and that our potential inability to grasp such an ontology would provide "one more proof of the limitations of human understanding" (p.

242), and thereby a superficial convergence with McGinn's concern that in tackling the hard problem, the required level of description of reality may not be "humanly accessible" (p. 98).

If it is not a tenable position, there are two options: either drop monism and become a "stuff" dualist (p. 237), which is Descartes's official view; or drop the reality of the non-experiential (p. 243). Strawson's intuitions are monist and he would therefore opt for the latter choice, following upon Eddington and Russell, a view represented by Coleman in this book. This would amount to the view that "the energy-stuff that makes up the whole of reality is itself something that is experiential in every respect" (p. 243).

Problems with Panpsychism

One of the major problems encountered by a fleshed-out panpsychist metaphysics is the composition problem, a problem with which William James was already well acquainted (pp. 248–249). The problem is: How can the experience of a conscious human subject result from the concatenation or composition of the elementary experiences of the ultimates of a panpsychist ontology? Goff thinks that "the emergence of novel macro-experiential properties from the coming together of micro-experiential properties is as brute and miraculous as the emergence of experiential properties from non-experiential properties," thus arguing that if Strawson rejects the latter, he cannot simply endorse the former (p. 54). Strawson is confident that insofar as we're looking at emergence of a property from a set of properties of the same type, this problem is "not nearly as bad" as the unintelligibility of emergence of the experiential from the non-experiential (p. 250).

But Goff has another argument that is more troublesome for Strawson (p. 250). Accepting the possibility of composition for the sake of argument (p. 57), Goff argues that if one holds that one's conscious experience is actually made up of the sum of myriads of experiences of a set of ultimate constituents, then one cannot simultaneously claim that one knows the experience *as it is in itself* (p. 58). For one's experience does not come across as constituted of a manifold of fundamental parts (p. 59). Strawson responds by specifying that the claim he makes about experience, i.e., that "the having is the knowing" (p. 253) does not entail that the full nature of the experiential is revealed to consciousness. Rather, "in the case of any particular experience, I am acquainted with the essential nature of the experience in certain respects, at least just in having it" (p. 252). If the proviso "in certain respects" seems like an ad hoc defence against a good objection, Strawson is ready to reformulate the claim that the full nature of the experiential is revealed in consciousness in such a way that the objection no longer applies. This, he achieves by pointing out that, "it does not follow, from any sense in which it is true that I know the whole essential nature of *my experience*, e_1, when it occurs, that I know the whole essential nature *of the event*, E_1, *that occurs when I have an experience*" (p. 254). As Strawson admits, this sounds problematic insofar as E_1 consists in nothing else than experience.

So, he develops his proposal by distinguishing a "from-the-inside" from a "from-the-outside" aspect of reality (pp. 256–257). While the first is experiential, the second is its being as energy-stuff. Importantly, it is the second that is involved in composition and causality. So "the ultimates . . . — experiencings — can be as they are to themselves, and their being as they are to themselves can be what they are, intrinsically, compatibly with their having causal effects on other . . . [experiencings] and compatibly with their playing a part in constituting other numerically distinct . . .

[experiencings]" (p. 261). Although this proposal would need further development, as Strawson himself acknowledges (p. 261), it seems to reintroduce the duality which Strawson discussed previously, namely a duality of the experiential and the non-experiential, both of which are characteristic of the fundamental nature of reality, although they are fundamentally distinct ways of being. But Strawson would not give the non-experiential the same status in this panpsychist ontology: "although there is no non-experiential being absolutely speaking, there is non-experiential being relatively or relationally speaking" (p. 261).

The Asymmetry of the Experiential and the Non-Experiential

Many of the criticisms that Strawson has to deal with involve pointing out that, although he does identify problems with the current physicalist approaches to the mind–body problem, his solution contains problems of a similar nature, and, as Simons puts it "Strawson could be right . . . I might be wrong, but my money is on him being wrong" (p. 150). Strawson's broad strategy is, generally, to introduce a dissymmetry between the problems encountered by current physicalist approaches and those which his approach exhibits. And this asymmetry is grounded in that between the experiential and the non-experiential. This takes on three forms.

First and foremost, the privileged epistemological status of the phenomenal is appealed to *against the a posteriori physicalist.* The latter wants to deny the claim that I have a direct acquaintance with the content of my phenomenal experience. Papineau claims that phenomenal concepts are involved, pointing out that he does not recognise "any way in which the mind 'captures' something, apart from simply referring to it" (p. 106). Chalmers engaged with the a posteriori physicalist on this issue through an illuminating analysis of the different types of phenomenal concepts by mapping them onto his two-dimensional semantic framework. In so doing, he identified a singular notion of concept, the unmediated *pure phenomenal concept* which refers to the phenomenal property "in terms of its intrinsic phenomenal nature" (Chalmers, 2004, p. 272). In criticising Papineau's "highly intellectualist conception of the mind" (p. 263), Strawson also implies that Chalmers's interpretation of the acquaintance with experience extends the use of the notion of "concept" too far. For Strawson, what is at stake here is *not a concept at all.* This is ultimately grounded in Strawson's metaphysics, whereby the subject of experience is understood as not "ontologically distinct from the experiencing" (p. 193).[5] For such a thin conception of the subject, experiencing implies direct acquaintance with the experience.

Second, the nature of the experiential, as it is grasped through such acquaintance, is intrinsic. That means that the knowledge one thereby acquires is knowledge of how the "metaphysical reality [of the experiential is] 'in itself'" (p. 251). This, Strawson contrasts with the "well established but often overlooked point" (p. 10) that physics and other sciences provide us with "purely formal" (p. 10), structural knowledge, a claim which only Rosenthal (p. 123) calls into question. This asymmetry between the experiential and the non-experiential provides a gap in the current physicalist explanation of the world, namely it leaves open what the intrinsic nature of reality actually is. But it also provides indirect support for Strawson's robustly defended intuition that the experiential cannot emerge from the non-expe-

[5]It is thus more plausible to endow ontological ultimates with experiential properties, as this avoids additional problems resulting from "having a rather large number of subjects on our hands" (p. 26).

riential. Strawson does not explicitly appeal to such a point, but it is clearly relevant to stressing in what way the experiential and non-experiential are not conceptually homogeneous notions (p. 15). I would claim that it is in fact the key notion at work in Strawson's analogy (p. 17) that spatial phenomena cannot emerge from non-spatial phenomena. It is the "intrinsically spatial" nature of the first which cannot be accounted for by what does not have such an intrinsic property. With the impossibility of such emergence (in a non-brute form, i.e., intelligible at least to God), Strawson is directly attacking the claims made by *reductive physicalists*, i.e., *a priori physicalists*.

Third, Strawson confronts the *eliminativist tendency* which arises from such reductive physicalism. This tendency arises from a possible reductive physicalist response to the criticism that whatever he accounts for in his emergentist story is not really experience. This response is just to deny that what is then referred to as "experience" is more than an illusion. Strawson sees this move as natural given some fairly reasonable assumptions made by the reductive physicalist because he takes "the existence of non-experiential reality for granted" (pp. 234–235). But, as Strawson reminds us time and again, if there is a tension in believing in the existence of experiential and non-experiential reality, "it is the non-experiential, not the experiential, that must give way" (p. 243). What Strawson is appealing to, is the basic priority of the experiential over the non-experiential. This arises from the simple epistemological fact that the existence of non-experiential reality is an assumption (p. 229) which contrasts with the certainty of the existence of the experiential. This claim makes the eliminativist move "more unreasonable that anything is reasonable" (p. 235).

But in these three asymmetry claims which ground his responses to the three main physicalist opponents (a posteriori physicalists, reductive physicalists, eliminativists), Strawson raises important issues. First, if the subject of experience is identical with the experiencing, who is the knower who goes beyond the immediacy of experience to form beliefs about it? Much as Strawson enlists Descartes, Leibniz and others' support to corroborate his thin notion of subject, unlike these authors, he does not say more about such a subject's epistemology.

Second, in presenting the experiential as that which can bridge the gap left open by the absence of intrinsic properties in the descriptions of reality offered by physics and the other sciences, Strawson is using his metaphysical proposal of getting rid of the notion of bearer of properties, to the benefit of a properties-only ontology. This makes it possible to operate an apparently smooth transition from the experiential that we are familiar with as a property of our subjectivity, to a notion of the experiential located outside the experiencing subject. This transition however overlooks the fact that the experiential is only such for the subject whose experience it is. The other subject's experience is not experiential for me. And indeed, Strawson encounters corresponding problems when answering objections to his notion of composition of experiential reality. He is led to introduce a difference between a "being-from-inside" and a "being-from-outside" (pp. 256–257). But such a distinction is highly problematic in a *realist ontology* where there is no role for anything like a perspective upon reality.

What these problems suggest is that Strawson's understanding of what is called for in a proper physicalist theory brings out the problems inherent in any realist ontology. The notions of object and subject are re-fashioned for the purpose of the argument, but this only goes to show that a reflection upon their nature and their interrelation is what is really required to deal with the hard problem of consciousness. And to start with, one could ask why, if one takes phenomenal consciousness seri-

ously, and takes it as real, why is it that it immediately becomes part of an objective world understood as defined independently of any perspective? This question is also particularly relevant in light of the sense in which we found Strawson and the eliminativists not to be talking of the same "thing": but why does taking the experiential as real imply it must be or constitute a "thing"? A more systematic reflection on the conditions of objectivity — the subject–object relation — that the realist takes for granted is required. That is, something like a *transcendental turn* is called for. This might for instance throw up an understanding of phenomenal consciousness as that which makes it possible for a subject to have a world (see Onof, 2008), an understanding that is also quite congenial to quantum physics.

In conclusion, this book, *Consciousness and its Place in Nature: Does Physicalism Entail Panpsychism?* is essential reading for anyone interested in the hard problem of consciousness and the mind–body problem. That so many key exponents of the main views on this issue agreed to contribute to the book is a testimony to Strawson's standing on the problem of consciousness. Apart from shedding much light on Strawson's exciting and challenging views, it is a useful guide to the geography of the various positions on the hard problem. As such, although some of the issues dealt with are very technical, there is much that a broad readership can derive from comparing different presentations of, and perspectives on the same issue. Aside from its omission of McGinn from the list of contributors' details, the book is very well edited.

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