

Re: Problem for physicalist evolutionists

Re: Problem for physicalist evolutionists

Source: <http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Talk/talk.origins/2008-03/msg07491.html>

- *From:* someone2 <glenn.spigel2@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 26 Mar 2008 10:39:28 -0700 (PDT)
-

On 26 Mar, 17:24, leland.mcin...@xxxxxxxx wrote:

On Mar 26, 1:11 pm, someone2 <glenn.spig...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On 26 Mar, 15:52, leland.mcin...@xxxxxxxx wrote:

On Mar 26, 11:21 am, someone2
<glenn.spig...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On 26 Mar, 11:45,
leland.mcin...@xxxxxxxx wrote:

On Mar 25, 11:02 pm,
someone2
<glenn.spig...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote:

On 26 Mar,
01:53,
leland.mcin...@xxxxxxxx
wrote:

On
Mar
25,
9:23
pm,
someone2

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<glenn.spig...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote:

On
26
Mar,
00:00,
leland.mcin...@xxxxxxxx
wrote:

On
Mar
25,
4:05
pm,
someone2
<glenn.spig...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote:

<snip>

Regarding
the
point
was
that
for
there
to
be
a
"what
it
is
like"
to
be
a
robot,
and
for
it
to

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have
a
first
person
perspective
of
a
tree,
it
would
have
to
simultaneously
have
to
have
knowledge
of
data
contained
in
numerous
seperate
nodes
at
the
same
time.
That
if
there
is
only
the
physical,
it
would
have
to
be
physically
possible
for
the
information
to
be
known
at
the
same

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time,
yet
how
physically
can
the
information
from
the
seperate
nodes
to
be
known
at
the
same
time,
when
each
one
is
a
mile
apart
from
the
others.

To
quote
Dennett
(from
memory,
so
forgive
a
little
accidental
paraphrasing):
"If
you
make
yourself
small
enough
you
can
externalise

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almost
everything".
Your
problem
is
in
in
saying
"*it*"
would
have
to
know..."
What
exactly
is
"it"
in
that
sentence?
One
would
think
"it"
should
be
the
robot,
but
then
you
talk
about
"it"
knowing
"data"
contained
in
numerous
separate
nodes",
so
the
it
is
something
observing
these
nodes.
Since
the

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nodes
are
the
robot,
the
"it"
must
be
something
else
—
some
kernel
of
consciousness,
or
homonculus,
that
"knows"
about
the
states
of
nodes.
You've
made
the
"it",
the
"consciousness",
small
enough
to
externalise,
well,
everything.
The
physical
robot
is
just
the
collection
of
nodes,
so
the
"it"
which
somehow
lies

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between/outside
the
nodes
--
but
that's
outside
the
physical
existence
of
the
robot.
You're
not
proposing
physicalism,
you're
proposing
dualism.

The
answer,
if
making
the
place
where
consciousness
comes
together,
smaller
simply
results
in
dualism,
is
to
simply
make
"it"
bigger.
Consciousness
is
not
some
central
place
"where

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everything
comes
together"
but
is
distributed
across
the
whole.
Just
as
there
is
no
central
point
in
your
brain
where
consciousness
is
centered,
a
"Cartesian
theatre"
to
use
Dennett's
nomenclature,
the
robot
doesn't
have
one
either.
"It"
is
conscious
of
the
information
on
all
those
dispersed
nodes
because
"it"
encompasses
those

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nodes
and
more.

All
of
this
is
well
explained
in
Dennett's
book
"Consciousness
Explained".
In
particular
he
sketches
out
exactly
how
such
a
distributed
model
of
consciousness
might
work,
along
with
some
empirical
experiments
that
bear
out
that
model.
The
book
itself
is
quite
old,
and
there's
been

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more
work
since
then
that
continues
to
bear
out
most
of
Dennett's
ideas
(I
would
suggest
"The
Illusion
of
Conscious
Will"
by
Daniel
Wegner
for
more
empirical
material).
Do
yourself
a
favour
and
get
Consciousness
Explained
from
the
library
(or
better,
buy
it
since
this
seems
to
be
an
interest
of

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yours).
If
you
are
going
to
argue
against
physicalist
conceptions
of
consciousness
it
would
be
best
to
actually
have
the
faintest
idea
what
one
of
the
most
prominent
physicalist
models
of
consciousness
is.

I'm
asking
how
there
could
be
a
first
person
perspective
for
the
robot
with
physicalism.

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If
it
had
a
robot
eye
which
was
looking
at
a
tree,
then
for
the
robot
to
have
a
first
person
perspective
of
the
tree,
simultaneous
information
from
multiple
nodes
would
be
required.
I
am
asking
how
you
would
be
suggesting
it
would
be
physically
possible?

Yes,
and

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I
answered
that
the
"it"
having
the
perspective
can
span
many
nodes,
and
so
doesn't
need
to
access
information
from
multiple
nodes
simultaneously,
because
"it"
already
has
the
information
in
some
of
the
multiple
nodes
that
constitute
"it".
You
then
ignored
my
answer,
and
re-asked
the
question.

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Of
course
if
you
really
want
an
answer
then
you
should
take
my
suggestion
and
read
"Consciousness
Explained"
by
Dennett
since
he
covers
exactly
this
in
way
more
depth
than
my
feeble
memory
can
manage
(I
really
ought
to
buy
a
copy).
I
must
admit
that
I'm
troubled
that
you
seem

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utterly
unacquainted
with
the
work
given
the
number
of
pointers
to
it
that
people
gave
you
the
last
time
you
were
here.

I've read
some of
Dennett's
and I don't
think much
of him. Like
his
quining
qualia for
example. I
thought his
suggestion
about
surgically
swapping
the taste
buds was
slightly
strange. The
suggestion
seemed to
be that taste
buds could
be
surgically
swapped

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over such
that the
salty ones
would fire
on the
nerves that
were
previously
attached to
the sweet
ones, and
the sweet
ones would
fire on the
nerves that
were
previously
attached to
the salty
ones. He
seemed to
suggest that
at
first an
icecream
might taste
salty, but
the brain
would
maybe
adjust
over time,
so that it
would be
eventually
experienced
as sweet.

<snip>

Of course there are
experiments that back up
this intuition. Swapping
tastebuds is a little hard, but
getting someone to wear
glasses that
invert the image is quite

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possible. Surprisingly enough, after a long enough period of time wearing such glasses, subjects said the world stopped seeming to be "upside down", and just seemed normal. Then, when the experiment was over and the glasses were removed, they claimed that the world seemed to look upside down. Other experiments with pressure-pads to transmit visual information by touch came up with similar results. Apparently the brain can, and does, rewire itself, or at least it's "perceptions" to cope with such changes. Dennett's speculation is really quite grounded.

Besides, whether you think much of him or not, his books have answers to many (if not all) of these questions you keep asking and re-asking and re-asking and re-asking. Perhaps you should try getting the answers there first, and then we can discuss what you find inadequate about them.

Anyway,
back to the
point, what
physically
is spanning
many
nodes?

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I may as well ask you "what is having to collect information from multiple nodes simultaneously". The answer to that question from your perspective is the answer to the question you just asked me from mine. What is spanning many nodes? The thing that is having the first person perspective. The "I" that the robot would say it had.

Well the answer is that there is only the spiritual. You are a spiritual being, and are being communicated a spiritual experience of the physical world. So the binding problem, or the representation problem (composition having no representation devoid of context) aren't problems, nor is there the issue of if "what it is like" to be a human having to be epiphenomenal as in some physicalist stories, such as those that suggest in principle, if the physical state of reality were known, and any rules in terms of the physical which governed interactions within reality were also known, then the change in state of reality over time (the behaviour) could be explained.

Ah so your answer is also that the physical is in the mind of God, and that therefore they aren't separate, so no need to look at it upside down and be thinking of something having to be spanning physical space.

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I have no idea exactly what that even means, let alone how you interpreted my answer to mean that. Let's try again. When you say "You are a spiritual being" you are using the word "you" to refer to a thing. I call that thing "me" or "I". You want to claim that the robot's "you" (or "me" or "I" from the robot's perspective) has to 'collect information from many different nodes simultaneously' in order to represent the tree, and that this isn't possible physically. My response is that the robot's "you" doesn't have to be a single point, but can instead be bigger. I'm saying that the robot's "you" (just as I presume is the case, pending further evidence, for my "me") is not a spiritual being, but rather a state that spans many nodes. Does that mean the robot's "you" potentially changes when the states of nodes change? Yes, but then I am not the same "me" that I was 10 years ago (or even 5 seconds ago). So how does the robot's "you" manage to represent the tree? As long as all the nodes containing the information about the tree are part of the nodes making up the robot's "you" it doesn't need to collect any information, it already has it.

What I am not understanding is that as there is nothing physically spanning these many nodes, and that according to you there only is the physical, shouldn't there be something physically spanning the node?

Are you suggesting forests don't physically exist? What spans multiple nodes is a configuration of information, states, and relationships between nodes.

I'm not suggesting there aren't forests. What I am having a problem with, is that if there was a picture made up of a 10 x 10 array of pixels, and each pixel was placed individually in the trunk of a tree scattered in forest, are you suggesting that as a high density of

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trees can be labelled as a forest, that it therefore is obvious that the forest could have a first person perspective of what the picture was of?

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