



The Hard Problem of Consciousness

The Philosophical Society - Members' Weekend, 2019

Introduction to the Hard Problem

Tim Bollands



Why the ‘Hard Problem’?

“Easy” Problems

Understanding :

- how our brains respond to stimuli
- how our brains report on our mental states
- how our brains control our body’s behaviour
- how our brains perform any function

The “Hard Problem”

Understanding :

- how and why such functioning is accompanied by a subjective phenomenal experience



The Most Exciting Problem in Philosophy !

- **Crosses the boundary between Philosophy and Science**

- ⇒ A real opportunity for philosophers to make a valuable contribution to science

- **Easy to understand**

- ⇒ Accessible to all

- **No one knows the answer !**

- There is an answer out there waiting to be found

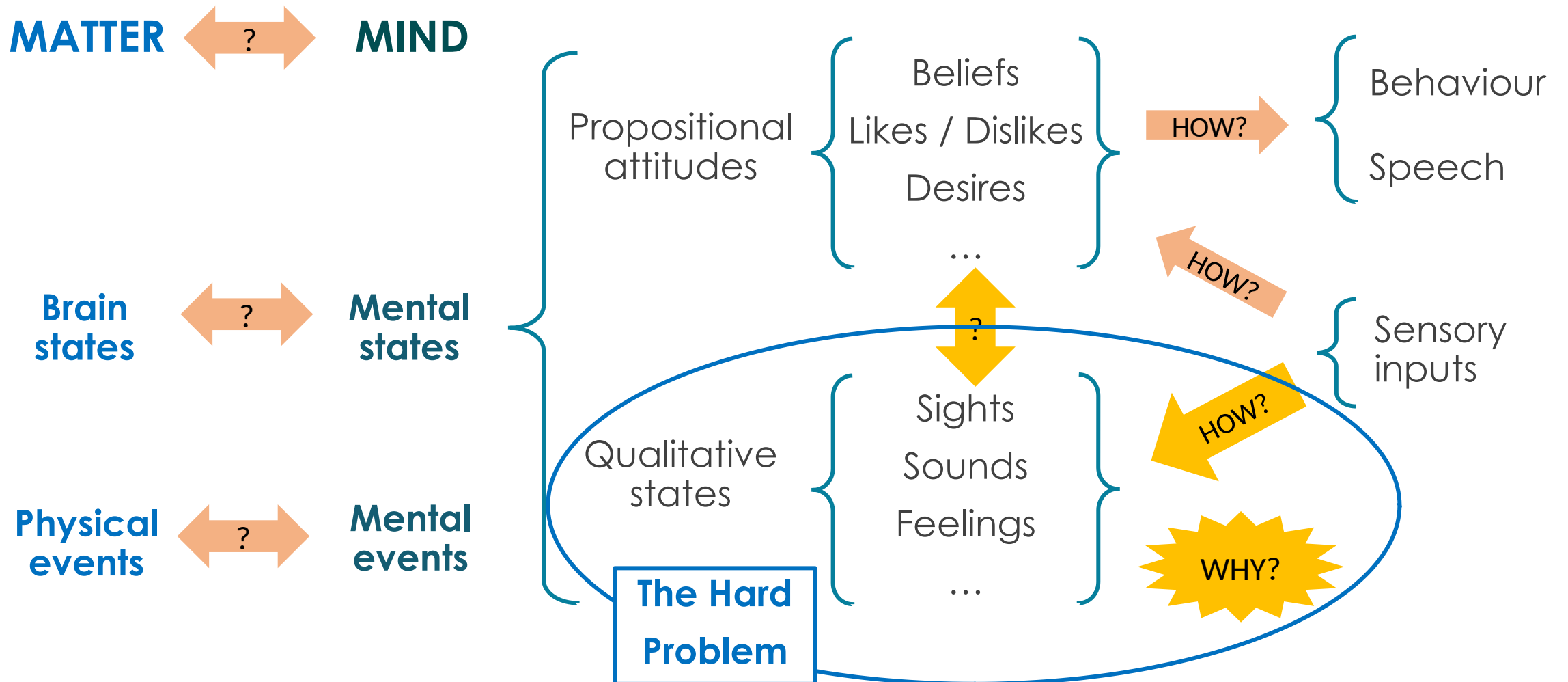
'The Mind-Body Problem' vs 'The Hard Problem'

**BODY
(MATTER)** ↔ **MIND
(SPIRIT)**



Doesn't it feel great
to be here at the
PhilSoc Members'
Weekend ?

'The Mind-Body Problem' vs 'The Hard Problem'



As David Chalmers put it ...

“Why is it that when our cognitive systems [process] visual or auditory information, we have visual or auditory **experience** - the **quality of deep blue** or **the sensation of middle C**? How can we explain why there is something it is like **to entertain a mental image**, or to **experience an emotion**?”

“It is widely agreed that **experience arises from a physical basis**, but we have no good explanation of **why** and **how** it so arises. **Why should** physical processing give rise to a **rich inner life** at all? It seems objectively unreasonable that it should, and yet it does”

David Chalmers (1995), *Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness*,
Journal of Consciousness Studies

Why are we not zombies?



Why are we not zombies?



In Chalmers' view...

“Consciousness fits uneasily into our conception of the natural world. On the most common conception of nature, the natural world is the physical world. But on the most common conception of consciousness, it is not easy to see how it could be part of the physical world. So, it seems that to find a place for consciousness within the natural order, we must either revise our conception of consciousness, or revise our conception of nature.”

David Chalmers (2002), *Consciousness and its Place in Nature*

PhilSoc Members' Weekend, 2019

Saturday

1:55 **A Hard Problem, but not that Hard** – *Mike Arnaudov*

2:45 **Is this Human Real or Synthetic?** – *Paul Griffiths*

4:00 **Quantum Mechanics, Neuroscience & Emergence** – *Dr Kanan Purkayastha*

4:50 **Correlation, Causation and Identity** – *Bob Stone*

5:45 **“Quanta” and “Qualia”** – *Alan Bailey*

Sunday

9:30 **A Marvel, not a Mystery** – *Jonathan Harlow*

10:15 **Mind within Matter** – *Tim Bollands*

11:30 **Panel Discussion** – *all 7 speakers*



THANK YOU

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