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The Meta-Problem of Consciousness

The meta-problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining why we think and say that there is a hard problem of consciousness. The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining how physical systems give rise to subjective experience. The hard problem typically contrasts with the easy problems of explaining behavior. There is one behavior with an especially close tie to the hard problem: we make verbal reports such as "consciousness is puzzling" and "there is a hard problem of consciousness". Explaining these reports is a tractable empirical project for cognitive scientists, and will almost certainly have consequences for the hard problem of consciousness. In this talk I lay out the meta-problem research program, I examine potential solutions, and I investigate the philosophical consequences.