

Anthony Freeman

Editorial Introduction

This set of essays came as a gift. Such collections normally result from invitations, either to contribute directly to a book or to take part in a workshop or conference out of which a publication proceeds, but in this instance things worked otherwise. The contributions all came in as unsolicited submissions to the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, their arrival spread over a period of some months. Only at some point during the review process did the individual papers present themselves to me as a group, as potential parts of a special issue on the topic of emergence. Rather as the Dalmatian dog or the face of Christ reveals itself from a random array of splodges in the familiar gestalt ‘pictures’, so did this collection stand out and offer itself to me — unsought — from among the hundred or so papers then under review. You might say that it ‘emerged’.

The collection’s gift-like quality has not, however, meant that the volume’s production has been pain-free. Almost without exception, the authors have toiled under the scrutiny of the journal’s referees and editors and revised their work more than once in bringing it to its present state. I am grateful to all of the contributors for their forbearance and co-operation, and wish especially to thank Joseph Goguen, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, for the special interest he has taken in this particular venture. I am also conscious of my debt to Robert Van Gulick. After ‘Tucson 2000’ he asked whether the journal might be interested in a paper written up from the notes for his pre-conference workshop on emergence. The offer was accepted, and I have no doubt it was having the promise of this paper in the back of my mind that predisposed me to ‘see’ the complete collection when it presented itself.

For this reason, as well as the value of starting a volume such as this with an overview of its subject matter, **Robert Van Gulick’s** ‘Reduction, Emergence, and Other Recent Options on the Mind–Body Problem’ has been given pride of place at the head of the contributions. The paper sets out ‘family trees’ showing how the various kinds of reduction and emergence parallel and relate to each other. The taxonomy carefully distinguishes between theories that concern ‘real’ underlying ontological/metaphysical relations and those that restrict themselves to representational/epistemic questions that arise from our human outlook on the world. As promised in his title, he also considers how some ‘other recent options’ fit into his

pattern of theories on the mind–body problem. He concludes — somewhat surprisingly — that the ‘logical space’ allocated to non-reductive physicalism is not additional to that occupied by emergence and reduction, but is rather ‘a special sub-region’ where these opposed tendencies intersect.

The rival claims of ontology and epistemology in discussions of emergence are further explored by **Harry T. Hunt** in ‘Some Perils of Quantum Consciousness’. He acknowledges a similarity between microphysics and phenomenal consciousness, in that both carry us to the limits of observation, but argues that this is not a sound basis on which to make ontological pronouncements concerning the nature of their relation. He sees in consciousness and quantum-level physics two expressions ‘on very different levels of complexity’ of the same organizing principles, i.e. emergentist ones. Thus a two-way metaphorical relationship is found between phenomenology and microphysics. It is because of these ‘intrinsically bi-directional’ perceptual structures that the ways the two ‘can inform each other epistemologically need to be kept separate . . . from ontological claims of explanation’.

In ‘Emergence and the Uniqueness of Consciousness’, **Natika Newton** offers what she hopes is ‘a happy blend of physicalist explanation with respectful acknowledgement of the robustness of subjective experience’. If that combination sounds a tall order, it is probably no accident. Newton here argues that the need for subjects to cope with ‘the forced blending of components that are incompatible’ is precisely what gives rise to phenomenal consciousness. This she presents as a special case of a more general observation that ‘novelties emerge from incompatibilities’.

Among today’s philosophers of mind a leading protagonist of ‘radical’ emergence is **Michael Silberstein**. In ‘Converging on Emergence’ he first sets out what he takes to be the three requirements of any theory of consciousness: to take consciousness seriously; to show how it is conceivable/possible that consciousness arises from fundamental elements that are not conscious; and to show how it is conceivable/possible that conscious states can causally interact with neurochemical states. He then argues powerfully for the view that the rivals to radical emergence all fall down on one or more of these criteria, leaving it the most plausible contender.

If the combined advocacy of the previous three papers carries us along too speedily towards the conclusion that emergence is the best or only solution to the mind–body problem, then **Scott Hagan** and **Masayuki Hirafuji** provide a cautionary amber light by drawing attention to some ‘Constraints on an Emergent Formulation of Conscious Mental States’. They take the widest possible view of what might constitute an ‘emergent formulation’, and include both functionalism and computationalism among those theories of mind ‘which are ultimately justified by an appeal to emergentist principles’. From here they proceed to ask whether emergent accounts of conscious mental states can fulfill their required aims within the paradigm of purely *classical* science, understood as entailing microphysical determinism. Distinguishing first between local and global states as the basis for emergence, and then between extrinsic and intrinsic modes of

description, and finally focusing on the question of locality, the authors conclude that the constraints of classical science do spell trouble for emergent formulations. Hagan and Hirafuji reject a number of unpalatable alternatives, such as those which deny the ontology of conscious states or offend against parsimony, and end up drawn towards some form of quantum solution.

Hagan and Hirafuji's warning amber light seems to be backed up by an uncompromising red one in **Todd Feinberg's** 'Why the Mind is Not a Radically Emergent Feature of the Brain'. It soon becomes clear, however, that Feinberg is very much in tune with the aims of the emergentists. Like them he makes the case for a physically grounded account of the mind–brain relationship, which nonetheless produces irreducibly personal mental states, but he finds their *radical* emergence an unnecessary postulate. The key to his interpretation is the concept of 'nested hierarchies', a holistic concept in which the various levels are composed of each other, as opposed to non-nested or pyramidal hierarchies in which there is a clear-cut top and bottom. He is thus in agreement with John Searle that consciousness is what Searle calls an 'emergent1 property' (where the higher level is 'caused by and realized in' the lower one) but not what Searle calls an 'emergent2 property'. This latter is the radical version of emergence advocated by Silberstein and denied in Feinberg's title.

The two concluding contributions both consider the emergence of religious consciousness. **Anthony Freeman's** article brings together three historically disparate ideas to conceive a naturalistic understanding of 'God as an Emergent Property'. These are: first, the fifth-century Christian notion that the divine/human relation in Christ paralleled the soul/body relation in all humans; secondly, the nineteenth-century view of Friedrich Schleiermacher that the divine presence in Christ was a function of an emergent 'God-consciousness' in his human awareness; and finally a moderate emergentist approach to human consciousness, along the lines of John Searle.

Finally there is a short appreciation and critique by **Alwyn Scott** of Huston Smith's recent book *Why Religion Matters*. Scott draws attention to the contrast between the top-down hierarchy said by Smith to be typical of religion: 'Spirit > soul > psyche > body' and the bottom-up scientific order: 'material > body > psyche > soul'. Smith decries the exclusion of religion by reductive 'scientism', but the absence (pointed out by Scott) of the word 'emergence' from his own index suggests that care is needed on both sides to avoid caricature. But with greater openness, the joint enterprise between science and religion hinted at in the title of Smith's last chapter and adopted as the title of Scott's article ('We Could Be Siblings Yet') might come to pass.