

# 24.09 Minds and Machines

## Fall 11 HASS-D CI

Chalmers on  
consciousness and its  
place in nature, contd.

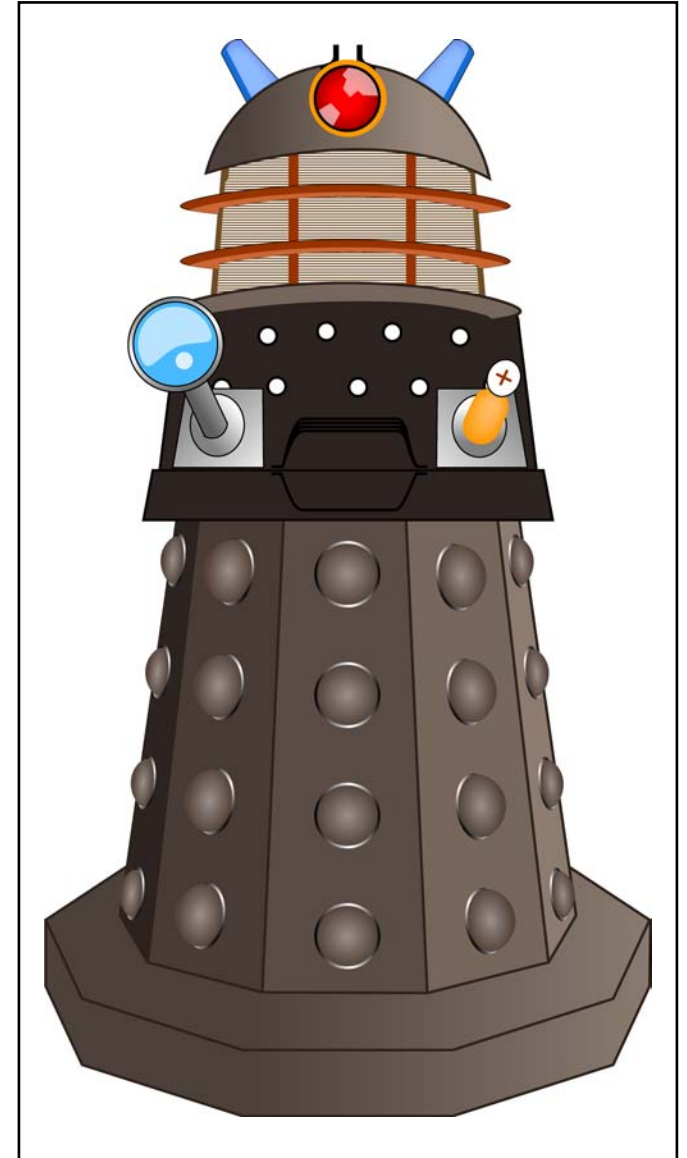


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# Chalmers' menu

type-A materialism (a priori physicalism)

type-B materialism (a posteriori physicalism)

type-C materialism (a priori mysterianism)

type-D dualism (cartesian interactionism)

type-E dualism (epiphenomenalism)

type-F monism (panprotopsychism)

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# the conceivability argument (compare argument D+)

1. it is conceivable that zombies exist
2. if (1), it is metaphysically possible that zombies exist (there is a possible world in which zombies exist)
3. if it is metaphysically possible that zombies exist, then consciousness is nonphysical
4. consciousness is nonphysical

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## two other arguments

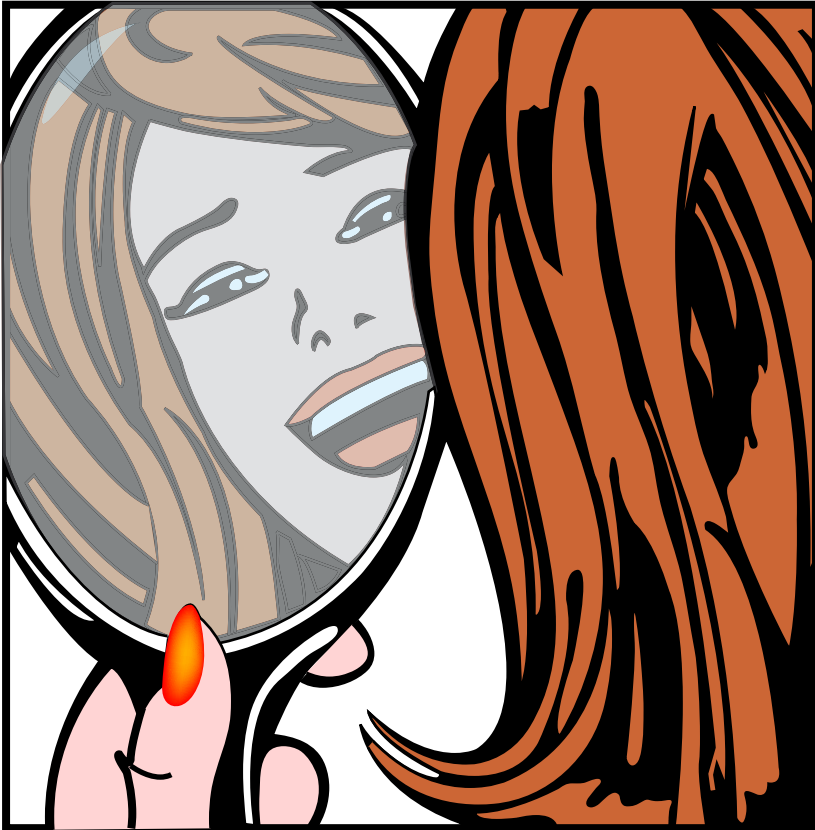


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the knowledge  
argument

omitted: the  
explanatory argument

# type-B materialism

denies premise 2:

if it is conceivable that zombies exist, it is metaphysically possible that zombies exist

the main problem for type-B materialism is related to Kripke's objection to the identity theory: apparent counterexamples to the claim that if  $p$  is conceivable,  $p$  is possible, turn out not to be genuine

# a disanalogy in the zombie case

actual (conscious) Paris and Nicky



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zombie Paris and Nicky



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once premise 2 is granted, it is hard to deny that what one imagines when one tries to imagine a zombie situation really is a zombie situation

that is because we can't explain away the apparent conceivability of zombies on the model of 'mike without heat'—there is no gap between the 'feeling of consciousness' and consciousness itself

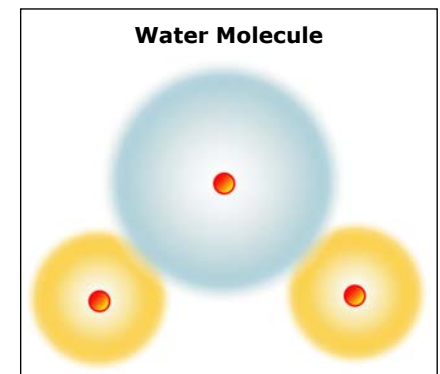
# recall our discussion of the knowledge argument

1. imprisoned Mary knows all the physical facts, hence:
2. if physicalism is true, Mary (before her release) knows all the facts

option B: resist the move from (1) to (2)

motivation: superchemist Sally... (see earlier slide)

see Chalmers, 'Consciousness and...', section 5 for a reply (there's a more technical reply in section 6—you don't need to worry about this)



# the menu

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## type-C materialism (suggested by Nagel's bat paper)

denies this version of premise 1:

it is ideally conceivable that zombies exist

accepts this version of premise 1:

it is prima facie conceivable that zombies exist

denies this version of premise 2:

if it is prima facie conceivable that zombies exist,  
then it is metaphysically possible that zombies  
exist

‘the type-C view...is not ultimately a distinct  
option’

## type-C collapses into A, D, F, or B

‘Once we accept that the concept of consciousness is not itself a functional concept, and that physical descriptions of the world are structural-dynamic descriptions, there is simply no conceptual room for it to be implied by a physical description. So the only room left is to hold that consciousness is a broadly functional concept after all (accepting type-A materialism), hold that there is more in physics than structure and dynamics (accepting type-D dualism or type-F monism), or holding that the truth of materialism does not require an implication from physics to consciousness (accepting type-B materialism). So in the end, there is no separate space for the type-C materialist.’

# type-D dualism

accepts the conclusion

denies the causal closure of the physical:

sometimes the correct causal explanation of a physical event (e.g., the rising of Fred's arm) cannot be given in solely physical terms

'D' is for Descartes

'By far the most influential objection to interactionism is that it is incompatible with physics'

recall our earlier discussion of dualism

## type-E epiphenomenalism (recall 'Epiphenomenal Qualia')

accepts the conclusion

accepts (typically) the causal closure of the physical:

the correct causal explanation of a physical event (e.g., the rising of Fred's arm) can always be given in solely physical terms

'physical states cause phenomenal states, but not vice versa'

see the 'zombie twin' objection

'epiphenomenalism is a coherent view...[but] it is an inelegant view, producing a fragmented picture of nature'

# Dave and Zombie Dave

consciousness  
is a mystery!



on the E-type view, Zombie Dave also writes *The Conscious Mind*, exclaims ‘consciousness is a mystery!’, etc.

# the menu

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# Type-F and the conceivability argument

1. it is conceivable that zombies exist
2. if (1), it is metaphysically possible that zombies exist (there is a possible world in which zombies exist)
3. if it is metaphysically possible that zombies exist, then consciousness is nonphysical
4. consciousness is nonphysical

easiest to think of Type-F as accepting (4), but adding that (in a sense to be explained) everything is non-physical

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‘consciousness is constituted by the intrinsic properties of fundamental physical entities...phenomenal or protophenomenal properties are located at the fundamental level of physical reality’

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# categorical bases

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‘Type-F monism is the view that consciousness is constituted by the intrinsic properties of fundamental physical entities: that is, by the categorical bases of fundamental physical dispositions. On this view, phenomenal or protophenomenal properties are located at the fundamental level of physical reality, and in a certain sense, underlie physical reality itself.’

what is a ‘categorical base’?

# philosophical toolkit: dispositions

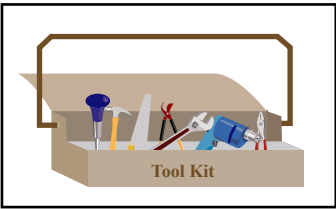


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recall our discussion of behaviorism

dispositions (powers, tendencies)

a special kind of property

examples: fragility, solubility, elasticity

a fragile object is (to a first approximation)  
something that would break if it were struck

a wine glass is fragile (has the property of  
fragility) even when it isn't manifesting the kind  
of behavior (breaking) distinctive of fragility



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# philosophical toolkit: categorical properties

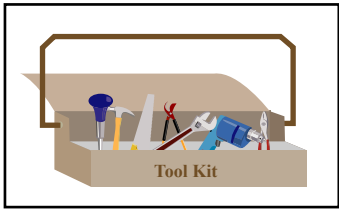


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categorical properties

a special kind of property

not a dispositional property

the kind of property the possession of which  
explains the possession of a dispositional  
property

e.g. a property the possession of which by a  
fragile vase explains why the vase is fragile—the  
'categorical basis' of fragility



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‘This view takes its cue from Bertrand Russell's discussion of physics in *The Analysis of Matter*. Russell pointed out that physics characterizes physical entities and properties by their relations to one another and to us. For example...a property such as mass is characterized by an associated dispositional role, such as the tendency to resist acceleration. At the same time, physics says nothing about the intrinsic nature of these entities and properties. Where we have relations and dispositions, we expect some underlying intrinsic properties that ground the dispositions, characterizing the entities that stand in these relations. But physics is silent about...the intrinsic properties that play the role associated with mass.’

# the 'combination problem' (William James)

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'our phenomenology has a rich and specific structure...[how can] a large number of individual microphysical systems, each with their own protophenomenal properties... add up to this rich and specific structure...?'

that problem notwithstanding, 'type-F monism...may ultimately provide the best integration of the physical and the phenomenal within the natural world'

## the menu again

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Greene and Cohen on  
free will

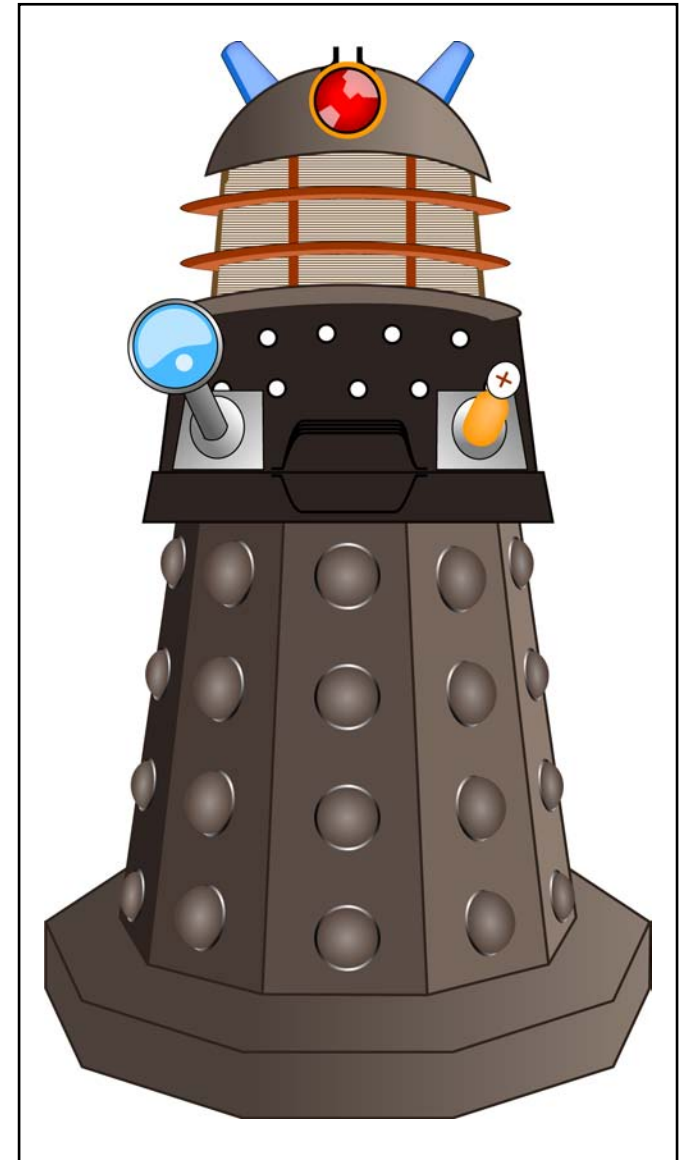


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