

# Final Exam Review Pt.2 Julius Schoenherr

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- Julius Schoenherr Part

## Lecture 06 Physicalism

### Mind vs. the physical world

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- Two related questions: Is the mind a physical thing? Is the world in its entirety a physical thing?
- Non-physical entities: properties, numbers
- The mind is concrete and normative
- Consciousness is undeniable

### The causal exclusion argument

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- Examples of physical entities: atoms, electrons, strings

### The Causal Exclusion Argument

- P1: In many cases, mental events cause physical events.
- P2: Physical events aren't systematically overdetermined.
- P3: Every physical event has a sufficient physical cause.
- Conclusion: Mental events must be physical states.
- If we can causally account for every physical event in terms of entirely physical causes, then invoking parallel mental causes seems to be at best superfluous, and, at worst, implausible.

### Premise 1

- Why is mental causation important?
- Moral responsibility is ascribed based on causal responsibility (e.g. I robbed him because I wanted to and thought he had money.)
- Actions explanation in terms of mental causation
- Alternative models are non-parsimonious (e.g. Leibniz relies on a deity.)

### Premise 2

- Principle of Causal Exclusion. If an event  $e$  has a sufficient cause  $c$  at  $t$ , no event at  $t$  distinct from  $c$  can be a cause of  $e$  (unless this is a genuine case of causal overdetermination). (Kim 2005, 17)
- Firing Squad. Two soldiers, A and B, shoot at the victim at exactly the same time. Each bullet is sufficient for the victim's death.
- Systematic overdetermination would be a cosmic coincidence (see Stoljar 2021) or require some non-natural explanation (see Leibniz).

## The exclusion argument

- Overdetermining causes must be related.
- *Principle of Causal Exclusion*. If an event *e* has a sufficient cause *c* at *t*, no event at *t* distinct from, or suitably related to, *c* can be a cause of *e* (unless this is a genuine case of causal overdetermination). (Kim 2005, 17)

### Overdetermination 1: determinable and determinates

- Pecking at Red and Crimson. Frieda the chicken pecks at everything that is red. Right now, she's pecking at a color patch whose color is crimson.

### Overdetermination 2: subsets

- Getting Upset by a Speech. John gives a really offensive speech. Especially one sentence in his speech, *P*, offended me.

### Conclusion:

- Mental states and physical states cannot be too different.

## What is physicalism

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- Everything is physical.
- The exclusion argument: non-physical things cannot affect things in the physical world.
- At least: We want an intimate relation between the physical world and everything else. Just how does something have to be related to the physical world in order to be able to have causal influence.
- Examples of physical stuff: particles, quarks, force fields
- Physical  $\neq$  Material
  - Material: deterministic and impenetrable
  - The physical: taken from physics
- Everyday objects like chairs and tables and special science objects like bacteria and cells are not physical.
- **Physicalism**. All entities are *nothing over and above* physical entities.

## Supervenience Physicalism

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- O facts supervene on P facts if no two possible situations are indiscernible with respect to their P-facts while differing in their O-facts. (see Chalmers 1996, 30)
- Basically: If two things are identical in all physical respects, then they have to be identical in all respects.
- Chalmers' metaphor: Suppose god created the physical world. To create the world in its entirety, a world that contains minds, rivers, animals, and such things, did he have to do more, or was he done after creating the physical world?
- Supervenience is a necessary condition.
- No free-floating entities.
- Supervenience: dependence vs. explanation.

# Identity theory: Explaining supervenience

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- Semantic-identification: Mental terms have a meaning identical to physical terms. Eg. "Bachelor" is meaning identical to "unmarried man".
- Token-identification: Mental events are identical to physical events. Eg. this pain = the firing of C-fiber.
- Type- identification: Mental types are identical to physical types. Eg. pain = C-fiber firing.

## Semantic-identification

- A hopeless endeavor.
- Unnecessarily demanding.
- There are many instances of no-semantic reduction:
  - Superman is identical to Clark Kent
  - The morning star is identical to the evening star.
  - Water is identical to H<sub>2</sub>O.

## Token-identification

- Identifies mental events with physical events.
- Problem: identical events could have physical and non-physical properties.

## Type-identification

- Popular in the 50s and 60s.
- Seen as a promising way for theory reduction.
- Example: heat = mean molecular energy.

## Type identification and multiple realizability

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- Multiple realizability: Mental states such as beliefs and desires can be multiply physically realized.
- Examples: cups, chairs, plastic, computers
- Functional kinds are generally multiply realizable
- "Doubts have arisen especially in connection with functional explanation in their higher-level sciences (psychology, linguistics, social theory, etc.). Functional predicates may be physically realizable in heterogeneous ways, so as to elude physical definition." (Fodor 1974)
- Could Martians have beliefs?
- Multiply realizable properties cannot be identical to one of its realizers.

## The problem of projectibility

- The problem of projectibility: Lawful behavior of multiply realizable properties cannot be projected into the future.
- A law about pain: "Sharp pains administered at random intervals cause anxiety reactions."
- "Suppose this generalization has been well confirmed for humans. Should we expect on that basis that it will hold also for Martians whose psychology is implemented (we assume) by a vastly different physical mechanism? Not if we accept the Physical Realization Thesis, fundamental to functionalism, that psychological regularities hold, to the extent that they do, in virtue of the causal nomological regularities

at the physical implementation level. The reason the law is true for humans is due to the way the human brain is "wired"

## Lecture 07 Consciousness

### Types of consciousness

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- Several senses of consciousness: "the word 'consciousness' connotes a number of different concepts and denotes a number of different phenomena." (Block 1995, 206)
- Access consciousness
- Creature consciousness
- Self-consciousness, Self-awareness
- Phenomenal consciousness: with what-it-is likeness.
- Note: conceptually distinct types of consciousness, but theoretically maybe related.
- Note: Phenomenal Consciousness distinct from functional states such as beliefs and desires.

### Phenomenal Consciousness

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- Phenomenal Consciousness is a property of a mental state.
- Examples: biting into a lemon, hearing a cello, Seeing bright red.
- States with what-it -is likeness

### The easy problems of consciousness

- Are the problems that seem directly susceptible to the standard methods of cognitive science, whereby a phenomenon is explained in terms of computational or neural mechanisms. (1995, 2)
  - E.g. problem of attention, access consciousness, creature consciousness (maybe self-consciousness).

### The hard problem of consciousness

- This is the problem of experience. When we think and perceive, there is something it is like to perceive, a subjective aspect of experience. (1995, 3)
- The problem of experience
- Consciousness is what makes life worth living!
- Consciousness is what you know most immediately.
- Consciousness is what is hardest to explain.
- Correlation vs. explanation.
- To avoid dualism, the view that consciousness is basic, we need an explanation.

### Summary

- Mary knows all physical facts about color.
- But actually seeing color teaches her something new!
- Clarification: After seeing color, Mary comes to know what it is like FOR OTHERS to experience color.

# Phenomenal Consciousness: The knowledge argument

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- Jackson: I am what is sometimes known as a "qualia freak." I think that there are certain features of the bodily sensations especially, but also of certain perceptual experiences, which no amount of purely physical information includes. Tell me everything there is to tell about what is going on in a living brain, the kinds of states, their functional role, their relation to what goes on at other times and in other brains, and so on and so forth, and be I as clever as can be in fitting it all together, you won't have told me about the hurtfulness of pains, the itchiness of itches, pangs of jealousy, or about the characteristic experience of tasting a lemon, smelling a rose, hearing a loud noise or seeing the sky. ("Epiphenomenal qualia," p. 273)
- Thus: functional descriptions of pain leave out the most important thing – how it feels!

## One possible solution: old facts, new perspective

- Horgan writes: [when Mary expresses this new knowledge, by saying "Seeing ripe tomatoes has this property," ] the referent of "this property" may very well be a physical property. This possibility is not ruled out by the fact that Mary learns something new from her experience. (p. 151)
- [By analogy,] even though Superman is Clark Kent, nevertheless we must distinguish between the information that Superman can fly and the information that Clark Kent can fly. Similarly, even if [the qualitative feature of Mary's experience that Mary calls "this property" ] is a physical property, nevertheless we must distinguish between (i) the information that the given property, as physicalistically described, is possessed by ripe-tomato experiences, and (ii) the information which Mary expresses by [saying "Seeing ripe tomatoes has this property." ] (pp. 151-2)
- In a nutshell: Suppose Louis knows that Superman can fly. When she learns that Clark Kent can fly she learns something new, but it is not a new fact.
- Disanalogies between Mary and Louis:
  - Names refer directly to the person. Consciousness representation seems to add something.
  - Louis knowledge gap is due to a knowledge gap in superman's life. Mary knows everything physical about color.

## Another possible solution: old facts, new abilities

- "Black-and-white Mary may study all the parapsychology as well as all the psychophysics of color vision, but she still won't know what it's like... If there is such a thing as phenomenal information, it isn't just independent of physical information. It's independent of every sort of information that could be served up in lessons for the inexperienced. For it is supposed to eliminate possibilities that any amount of lessons leave open. ("What Experience Teaches," p. 289)
- "The Ability Hypothesis says that knowing what an experience is like just is the possession of these abilities to remember, imagine, and recognize. It isn't the possession of any kind of information, ordinary or peculiar. It isn't knowing that certain possibilities aren't actualized. It isn't knowing-that. It's knowing-how."
- Compare: knowing everything there is to know about riding a bike, and knowing how to ride a bike.
- Which abilities?
- Could we imagine anyone having these abilities without them knowing what it is like to experience, say, red? Eg. blindsight
- Why do we have the ability? Isn't it because we saw color?

## Phenomenal consciousness: Zombies

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- Philosophical zombies: "Someone or something physically and functionally identical to me (or to any other conscious being), but lacking conscious experiences altogether."
- What is a physical & functional duplicate?
- How might zombies pose a problem for physicalism?
- Philosophical zombies:
  - Can write philosophical papers
  - Have beliefs, desires.
  - They say that they are conscious.
  - They cry when sad things happen
  - BUT THEY AREN'T CONSCIOUS

## Physicalism

- P1. Zombies are conceivable.
- P2. What is conceivable is possible.
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- P3. Therefore, zombies are possible.
- C1. If zombies are possible, then physicalism is false.
- C2. Physicalism is false
- Why is C1 true?

## Zombie conceivability

- P1. Zombies are conceivable.
- "When philosophers claim that zombies are conceivable, they invariably underestimate the task of conception (or imagination), and end up imagining something that violates their own definition." (Dennett 1995, 322)
- "It seems to me that postulating zombies is exactly as silly as postulating epiphenomenal gremlins, and so when a philosopher does it, I blush for the profession. Show me, please, why the zombie hypothesis deserves to be taken seriously, and I apologize handsomely for having ridiculed those who think so." (Dennett 1995, 336)
- Does a zombie believe that it is not zombie?
- If consciousness is not the ground for the zombie's belief, what does that say about our belief that we are conscious?

## From conceivability to possibility

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- Ideal Negative Conceivability. A proposition P is ideally negatively conceivable if it cannot be ruled out by a priori reasoning. (Chalmers 2010, 144)
- Not imagination
- Not bound by human limitations
- Example: unproven theorems in mathematics
- Ideal negative conceivability and maximal world descriptions. P is ideally negatively conceivable if there is a maximal description of a world that contains P. Maximal descriptions of worlds are such that for every proposition X, this world either contains X or its negation. (Chalmers 2010)
- Create a set of propositions to represent the world:  $S = \{...\}$

- For each proposition – e.g. “Obama has exactly three children” – if it is consistent with S, stick it in S: S = {Obama has exactly three children, ...}
- If a proposition – e.g. “Obama has exactly two children” – is inconsistent with S, add its negation to S: S = {Obama has exactly three children, It is not the case that Obama has exactly two children, ...}
- Repeat this procedure for all propositions.
- Metaphysical Possibility. Something is metaphysically possible if it is possible simpliciter.
- Nomological Possibility. Something is nomologically possible if it is possible, holding fix the laws of nature.
- Let's reformulate our argument:
  - P1\* Zombies are ideally negatively conceivable.
  - P2\* What is ideally negatively conceivable is metaphysically possible.
  - P3\* Therefore, zombies are metaphysically possible.
  - P4\* If zombies are metaphysically possible, then physicalism is false.
  - 5 Physicalism is false

## Lecture 09 Intentionality

### The problem of representation

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- Aboutness. Mental states are about the world, in that sense they are ontologically special, since nothing no physical thing seems to be about anything.
- Intentional Inexistence. "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentionality inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, relation to a content, direction upon an object [...]. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself." (Brentano 1925, 68)
- Non-existent property instances. E.g., taking a dog for a cat
- Non-existent objects. E.g., hallucination
- Intentionality = aboutness = representation
- Brentano: intentionality is the mark of the mental
- Intentional States:
  - Propositional attitudes
  - Perceptions

### Features of intentionality

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- Relations to objects
  - Intentional states seemingly relate us to objects.
  - Intentional objects may not exist
  - Compare to normal relations:
    - Diogenes sitting in his tub presupposes that there is a tub
    - But John hallucinating a unicorn does not require a unicorn that he is hallucinating
- Non-truth entailing and Non-existence entailing

- Neither "John believes that Obama won the election" nor its negation entails that Obama won the election.
  - Neither "John thinks of Unicorn" nor "John does not think the Unicorn" entails that unicorns exist.
- Non-substitutability
  - Superman = Clark Kent
  - Louis might believe that superman can fly but she might not believe that Clark Kent can fly.
  - Compare: Superman can fly if and only if Clark Kent can fly.
- Objects: Yes, but not necessarily existence.