

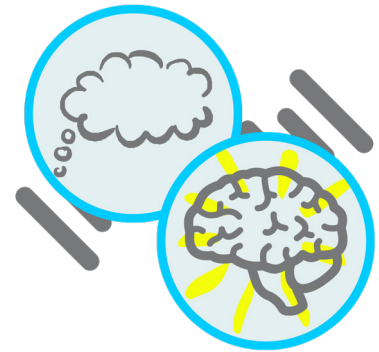
Lecture Notes



Dualism

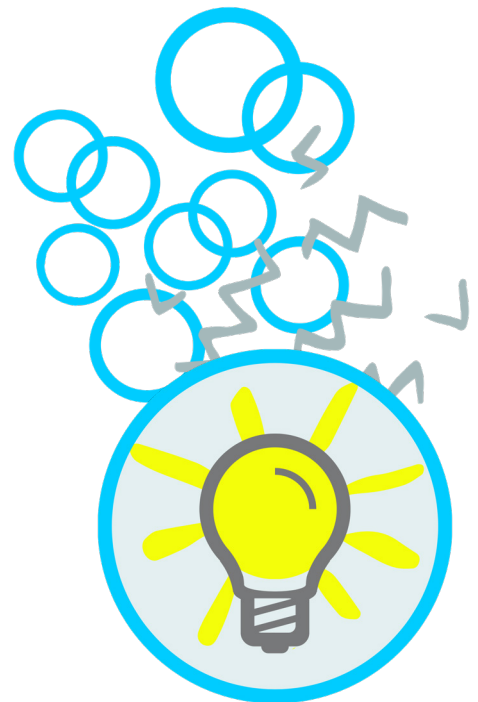


You've watched the lecture. Now here are the notes! The core parts of what we covered on Substance Dualism and Property Dualism



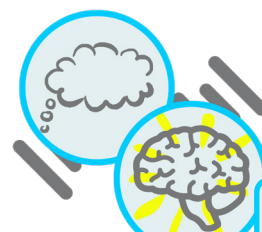
Introduction

- Our consciousness is odd. Really odd. Look around you.
- There are many physical objects. They simply exist
 - o But we, and other animals, **perceive**
 - o We are aware of our existence. And of the world
- So, there are two kinds of thing in the world:
 - o Physical, non-conscious things
 - o Conscious things
- Is this supremely weird thing - consciousness - a result of some sort of soul, or is it matter, awakened?
 - o That is the question of **Philosophy of mind**
- There are two main answers:



Materialism

Consciousness is physical



Dualism

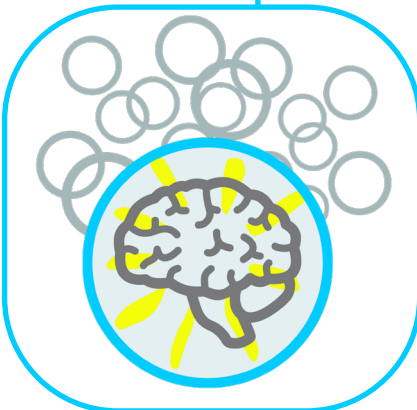
Consciousness is non-physical

- In this set of notes, we're going to examine Dualism

- Here, we're going to examine both **Substance Dualism** and **Property Dualism**:



- o **Substance Dualism:** Is the claim that there are two substances (Mind and Brain)
 - These exist independently of each other
 - But they also interact
 - The brain sends the mind signals, and the mind tells the brain what to do
 - This was proposed by many Philosophers over the years, but we will look specifically at René Descartes' form of Substance Dualism



- o **Property Dualism:** This is the claim that there is only one substance (the Brain) with non-physical properties (Mental events)
 - This means that there is only one independently existing thing (the brain)
 - But that it has different properties
 - One of these properties is consciousness, which is non-physical
 - The non-physical consciousness is a property of the brain the same way that "brown" is the property of "wood"
 - The non-physical conscious properties are caused by the brain, but have no causal powers on the brain - they can't make the brain do things
 - An example of someone who supports this is David Chalmers

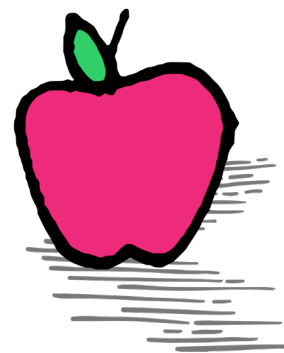
Quick definitions

Substance

A thing in itself
(Example: An apple)

Property

Something generated by a substance, and
reliant upon it
(Example: The redness of an apple)



SUBSTANCE DUALISM



Substance Dualism

- Substance Dualism is the idea that there are two kinds of thing (Substance):
 - o The physical body
 - o The non-physical mind
 - These two things interact, your body telling your mind what is happening in the world, and your mind telling your body what to do
 - The mind is seen as the 'real' you. The place where your reasoning, willing, judging and so on takes place.
- **Substance Dualism** is sometimes called **Cartesian Dualism**.
 - o This is because one of the main proponents of this theory was **René Descartes**
 - o Descartes made a distinction between “**extended**” and “**unextended**” things
 - An **Extended** thing exists in space, it can be measured and often perceived – **the body is extended and called res extensa**
 - An **Unextended** thing has no location in space, and whilst it exists, it cannot be seen or measured – **the mind is unextended and called res cogitans (thinking thing)**
 - o As the Philosopher **John Cottingham** explains:



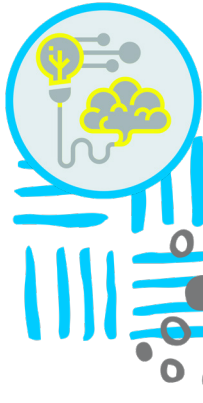
“By “Cartesian dualism” is meant the thesis that man is a compound of two distinct substances – res cogitans, unextended thinking substances, or mind, and res extensa, extended corporeal substance, or body.”



“Descartes”, by John Cottingham (p. 119)

The Conceivability Argument

- In order to justify his claims about the mind, Descartes presented the Conceivability Argument for Substance Dualism
- In essence, the argument says:



Claim 1

If my mind and body were the same thing, then I wouldn't be able to conceive of them existing separately

Claim 2

I can conceive of my mind existing without my body

Conclusion

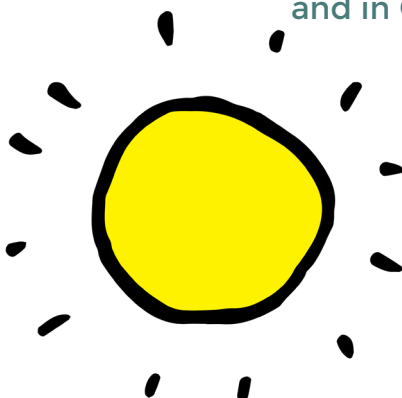
Therefore, my mind and body are different things (Substance Dualism is true)

- To properly understand this argument, we need to go through it, one claim at a time, and find out why Descartes would believe each one
- If we understand this, then we can know why he believes his conclusion to be true

Claim 1

If my mind and body were the same thing, then I wouldn't be able to conceive of them existing separately

- This rests on the idea of **Leibniz's Law**
- Leibniz's Law states that:
 1. If two things have the same properties, then they're the same thing
 2. If two things have different properties, then they're different things
- o An example of (1) could be:
 - People have had different names for the Sun (for instance, in Greek it was "Helios" and in Old English, "Sunne")



- o But all of these terms refer to something with the same properties (that is, a G-type main-sequence star located at the centre of our solar system)
- o And given that "Sun", "Helios" and "Sunne" all have the same properties and location, we can conclude that they refer to the same thing

- An example of (2) could be:

- The Earth and the Moon



- They both exist as objects in space, but the Moon is a different size, has no atmosphere and orbits the Earth.
- They have different properties, and so are different things

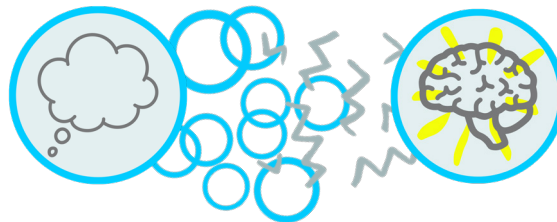
- Descartes argues that if I can **conceive** of something existing without something else, then those two things have **different properties**

- To **conceive** of something is to imagine it, and to understand that the hypothetical situation isn't contradictory

- For instance, I can conceive of the Earth existing without the Moon, and so the Moon and the Earth are different things

- But I can't conceive of the Sun existing without the star at the centre of our solar system, so they are not different things

- In the same way, says Descartes, if I can **conceive** of the **mind** existing without the **body**, then, according to **Leibniz's Law**, they must have **different properties** and be different things



Claim 2

I can conceive of my mind existing without my body

- This second part of Descartes' Conceivability argument relies upon an understanding of his Method of Doubt, and the Cogito

- **The Method of Doubt**

- Here, Descartes produces rational arguments against belief in the physical world.

- In summary:

- Knowledge for Descartes is only that which cannot possibly be doubted. This is called **infallible knowledge**

- But all our sensations could be doubted:



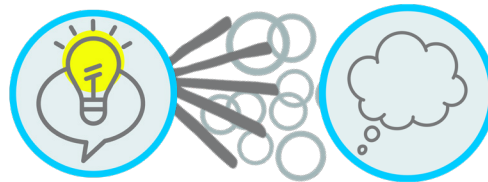
- The Dream Argument: We could be in a dream that is indistinguishable from reality. This is a possibility. This means it's possible that the reality we perceive is actually false, so we must reject it as if it were genuinely false. All in search of **infallible knowledge**



- The Malevolent Demon Argument: It's possible that even our thoughts are not our own. It's possible that some other being (Descartes calls it variously the Malevolent Demon, and an Evil God) could put thoughts into our head that are false. This is possible. So, we must reject all of our thoughts as if they are genuinely false. All in search of **infallible knowledge**
- So, if we could potentially doubt all of our sensations and thoughts, then **is it possible that the physical world doesn't exist** and this includes our bodies

○ The Cogito

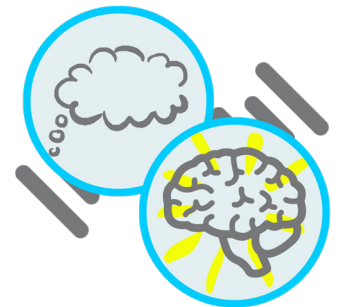
- Descartes does, however, acknowledge that we cannot possibly doubt our own minds, because to do so, we would need to use our minds
 - As Descartes puts it: "Cogito Ergo Sum", or, I think therefore I am



Conclusion

Therefore, my mind and body are different things
(Substance Dualism is true)

- So, there is a scenario that is logically consistent where I can doubt the existence of my body (due to the Method of Doubt) but cannot doubt the existence of my mind (due to the Cogito)
- And if I can conceive of my mind existing without my body, then my mind and body are distinct things

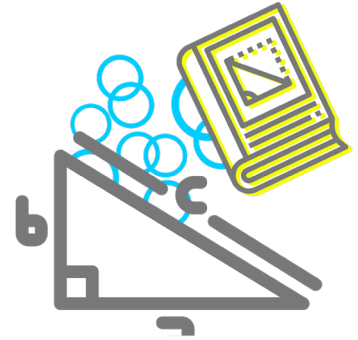


Criticism of the Conceivability Argument

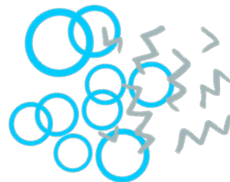


- **Antoine Arnauld** was a French contemporary of René Descartes, and raised a series of objections to his Philosophy. The one that most concerns us here is his criticism of Descartes' Argument for Dualism
- Conceivability arguments only work, says Arnauld, when a full understanding of the facts is known
 - For instance, one may get a conceivability argument wrong if unaware of the proof of Pythagoras' theorem

- For someone ignorant of Pythagoras' theorem, it might be possible to argue that it is conceivable for the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle not to be the square of the two other sides
- And if it is conceivable, then it must be possible



- The problem with this argument is that there is a proof that it is not actually conceivable.
- So, the person making the argument is ignorant of all of the facts, and cannot properly conceive of Pythagoras' Theorem
- **Without a full understanding** of the facts, we **cannot know** what is possible and what is not
- Descartes' conceivability argument, says Arnauld, is performed without a full understanding of the facts
 - For instance, it may be the case that I am a thinking thing, but I may be a thinking thing that is extended (that is a brain only)
- Arnauld concludes that Descartes' conceivability **argument does not work**, because it cannot establish that it is possible that the mind exists without the body



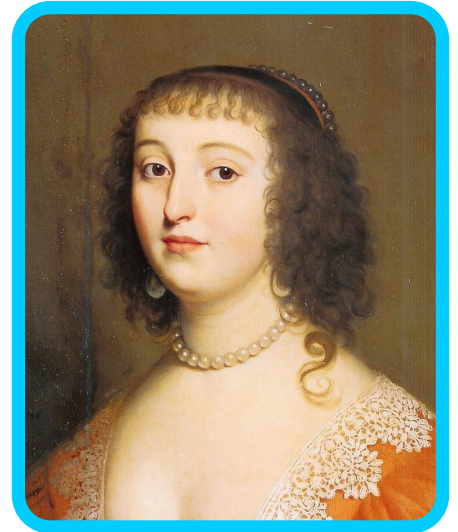
Criticisms of Substance Dualism



- There are two criticisms of Substance Dualism we're going to examine:
 - The Problem of Interaction
 - The Problem of Other Minds
- These are criticisms of the theory of Dualism, rather than an argument for Dualism
- Criticisms of a theory mean that - if they are successful - then the theory is wrong
- Whereas criticisms of an argument for a theory mean that - if they are successful - the argument for the theory is wrong, but the theory itself is not necessarily wrong
- Unlike Arnauld's criticism (which is an attack on an argument for Dualism) the following are criticisms of the theory of Dualism itself

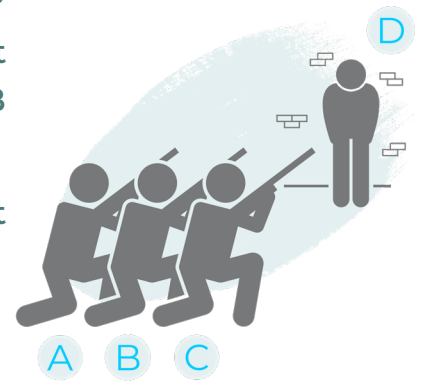
The Problems of Interaction

- **Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia** spent much of her time in correspondence with Descartes, whom she considered one of the greatest minds of their generation.
- She argued that physical things interact only by bumping into each other. To do this they need sides.
- But according to Descartes, the mind has no sides, so it can't interact with physical objects.
- And this would mean that, if Descartes were right about the existence of a non-physical mind, there would be no way for it to interact with the brain.



The Pairing Problem

- Substance Dualism faces a similar problem in the form of the Pairing Problem
- One of the key components of Descartes' form of Substance Dualism is that the mind is an unextended thing, and so does not exist **in space**, it has no **spatial location**
- **Jaegwon Kim** gives his Pairing Problem which says that;
 - If we take three people firing guns A, B and C at person D, but only gun A hits person D, whilst B and C don't.
 - We can say that gun A had a causal effect on person D.
 - But why gun A and not B or C?
 - We could look at the causal chain, but then each instance in the causal chain is subject to the same question.
 - The other option - and the one preferred - is to say that gun A was more successfully related to person D in space that guns B or C (A was aimed better!)
 - So, if there are two things with the same causal power, and one affects something and the other one doesn't, we need to explain why that is the case, and the answer is **spatial location**
 - However, when we turn to the Descartes' concept of the non-physical mind, there is a problem
 - Suppose (as is possible), there are two minds, A and B with the same



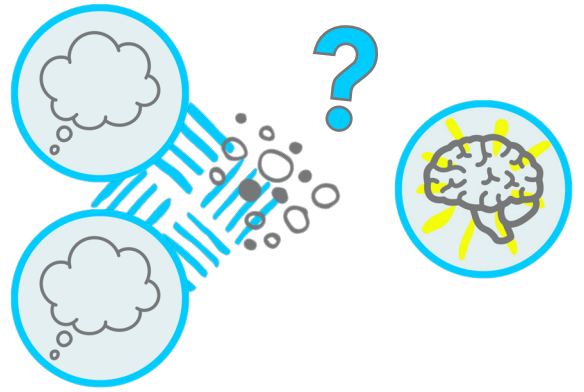
causal power, and a body, D, which is moved

- » Without spacial location there is no way to link either mind A or B to the moving of body D

- As Kim writes;

“Causality requires a spacelike structure, and as far as we know, the physical domain is the only domain with a structure of that kind.”

“Philosophy of Mind”,
by Jaegwon Kim (p. 48)



The Problem of Other Minds

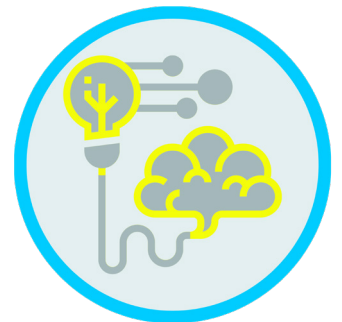
- Remember, according to Substance Dualism, the mind can only be known through **introspection**

Quick definition

Introspection

This is examining your own thoughts

For instance, Descartes thought he could prove the existence of his mind through the fact that he had thoughts

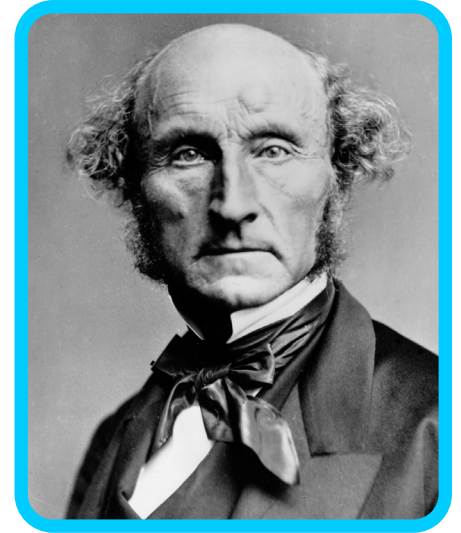


- The **Problem of Other Minds** states that:

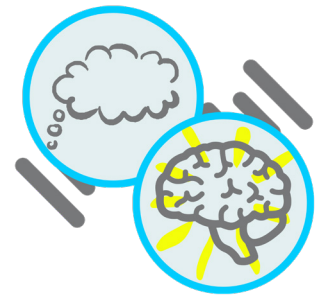
- We can only know our own thoughts through introspection
 - We can't look into the heads of others
- If Dualism is true, then we can only know that a mind exists through seeing the thoughts
 - For instance, through Descartes' Cogito argument
- This would mean, therefore, that we can only know that our own mind exists



- In **response**, John Stuart Mill, a Victorian Philosopher, gives an argument by which he thinks a Dualist can know that there are other minds.

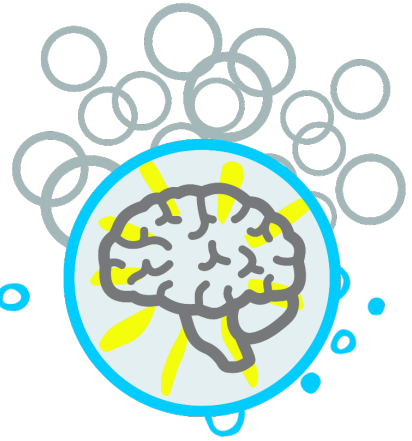


- He argues:
 - We can, introspectively, see that when we think a particular thing, our body reacts in a particular way
 - For instance, when I choose to lift my arm then my arm lifts
 - This happens every time
 - If it happens every time, then there must be a lawlike connection between my thoughts (in my non-physical mind) and my actions (in my physical body)
 - There are other people in the world with body which:
 - Act like mine
 - Claim to have thoughts like me
 - If there is a lawlike connection between thoughts and actions, then, given that other also perform actions, they must also have thoughts
 - Hence, as a Substance Dualist, you can know that other minds exist



- There is a criticism of Mill, which claims he hasn't successfully established that a Substance Dualist can know other minds exist
- The criticism is that **one instance** of a connection between thought and action is not enough to argue that there is **always** a connection between thought and action
- You **can't** establish a **lawlike** thing based upon **one instance**
 - For instance, you can't claim that because your football is yellow, then all footballs must be yellow
 - You need a much larger sample size
- And Mill can't argue that, because he experiences a connection between the mind and the body, all other people do as well

PROPERTY DUALISM



Property Dualism

- The other form of dualism that interests us still claims that there are two **kinds** of events: extended and non-extended things, but that they are **not** both **substances**.
 - o The **brain** is an extended **substance**
 - o But it produces **mental** events which are non-extended **properties** of it

Quick definitions

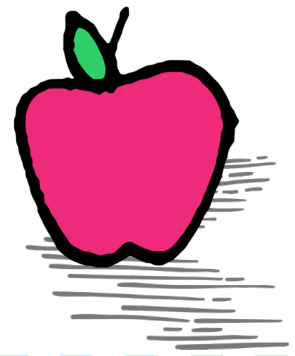
Substance

A thing in itself
(Example: An apple)



Property

Something generated by a substance, and
reliant upon it
(Example: The redness of an apple)



- Think of Property Dualism a little like a steam train:
 - o The train itself does all the work
 - The brain does all the computing, decision-making etc.
 - o But it produces steam as a side-product
 - The brain produces non-extended mental events as a side product
 - » These mental events are qualia

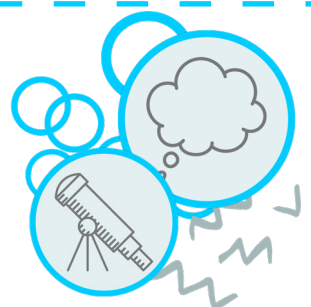
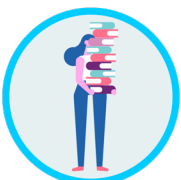


Quick definition

Qualia

Subjective awareness: being aware in the first
person

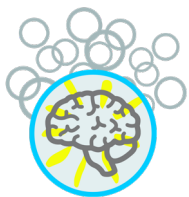
Examples: Seeing colours, hearing
sounds



- The reasons often given for believing in Property Dualism are two-fold:
 - o There are deep problems with Substance Dualism (see above)
 - o But, there are reasons to believe that qualia are non-physical (see the Hard Problem of Consciousness)

The Hard Problem of Consciousness

- The reasons for believing qualia to be non-physical rest on one problem. This is the **Hard Problem of Consciousness**
 - o It says that whilst the physical is objectively describable, mental phenomena (esp. qualia) can only be experienced subjectively.



- You can fully describe the physical phenomena in the brain without describing qualia

» So, qualia must be non-physical

» And the hard problem is then to explain what qualia are

- An example of the Hard Problem of Consciousness is given by Thomas Nagel in his article “What is it like to be a bat?”

- o He argues that:

- We can **fully objectively** understand the **physical nature** of a bat

- But we cannot understand what it is like to be a bat (a bat’s **Qualia**)

» So, the bat’s Qualia are not **objective** and must instead be **subjective**

- Then, if all **physical** things are **objective** and **Qualia** is **subjective**, then is **Qualia non-physical**?



David Chalmers’ Zombie Argument for Property Dualism

- Chalmers’ argument relies upon the conceivability of Zombies

- o A Philosophical Zombie is not like something out of a horror movie. Rather, it is a **being physically identical to humans, but lacking in consciousness.**



- Chalmers argues that if such a being is **conceivable** then it is possible for us to describe all physical mental processes (as we would with a human body or with a complete zombie) without describing qualia
- And if we can describe everything physical, **and not describe qualia**, then qualia don’t fit physical descriptions
 - o Qualia are non-physical

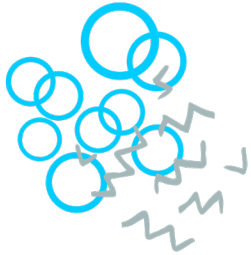
Daniel Dennett's Objection to Chalmers' Argument

- The Materialist Philosopher Daniel Dennett argues that there is something fundamentally wrong in the way that Chalmers conceives of Zombies. They're hollow.
- Zombies (as defined by Chalmers) are physically identical to us, but lack consciousness (the experience of qualia).

- But, says Dennett, consciousness **isn't only Qualia**

- It is also:

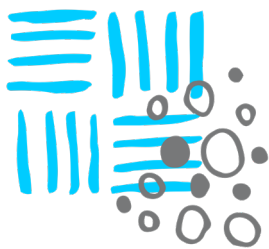
- » Intentions
- » Desires
- » Beliefs
- » Knowledge
- » Opinions etc.



- Dennett argues that in order for Zombies to be physically identical to us, they must have an internal mental life (i.e. possess reflective thought).
 - (Dennett gives these Zombies a new name to signal that they are now properly defined: **Zimboes**)
- Dennett argues that, now we fully understand that a purely physical Zombie (Zimboe) must have an internal mental life, we can get to the bottom of the problem
 - The thoughts a Zimboe has are identical to ours:

- Say a Zimboe is injured:

- » They would **believe** that they have experienced the Qualia of pain.
- » They would **desire** not to experience the Qualia of pain again.
- » They would **intend** to take different action to avoid the Qualia of pain in the future.



- Believing you have Qualia and acting like you have Qualia is **the same thing**
 - Zimboes, says Dennett, are identical to us
 - So, contrary to Chalmers, we can describe a being purely physically and not leave out anything. There is no room, or use, for Qualia.

Criticism of Property Dualism

- Central to the kind of Property Dualism we've been examining is Epiphenomenalism:
 - o **Epiphenomenalism:** Mental properties are generated by the mind but cannot act causally upon the mind
- If you're not going to believe in Interactionist Substance Dualism as a result of the arguments above, you are left (if the arguments are sound) with Property Dualism, and most likely, Epiphenomenalism.
- However, there are multiple problems with Epiphenomenalism, mainly to do with the apparent **causal role of the mental** and **introspection**.
 - o One of the biggest is the problem of introspective self-knowledge:
 - According to Property Dualism, things like **knowing** and **intending** are done in brain, whilst **experiencing** (Qualia) is the non-physical by-product
 - According to Property Dualism, my brain produces Qualia, but Qualia doesn't have any effect on the brain
 - **However**, if both above were true, then I would not be able to **know** about or **intend** to act on my **experiences** (Qualia)
 - » Yet, I can know about my Qualia
 - » So, Property Dualism must be wrong – if Qualia exist, they must exist physically in the brain

