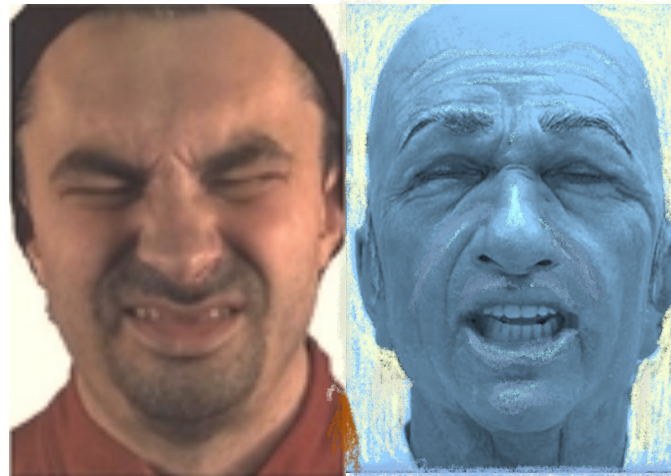


Recall: Two Major Aspects of Consciousness



Self-awareness (“Know Thyself” by unnamed artist (owner Dovanna Cleary), Salvador Dali, and Art Levin)



Phenomenal Consciousness (Colors, pains, etc.; dreams)

In words:

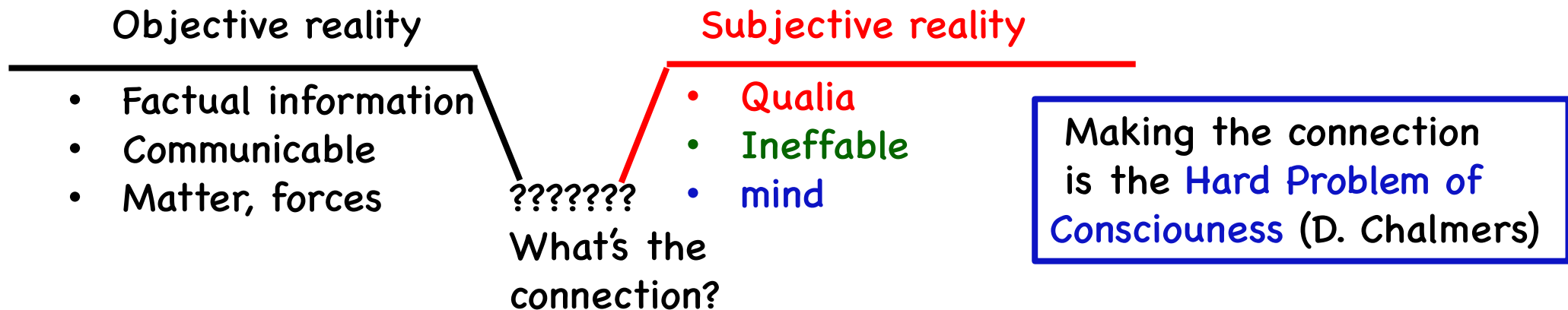
Kinds of consciousness

- Accessibility, reportability, of our own characteristics, history, relationships, possessions, etc. → “access consciousness”;

Implementation in an AI agent – knowledge base, reasoning, language, connection to the world (vision, etc.)

- We have sensory impressions/experiences – colors, shapes, motions, sounds, fragrances, pains, pleasures, emotions, real & imaginary → phenomenal consciousness (qualia)

The Explanatory Gap and “the Hard Problem” of Consciousness



Broad classes of “solutions”

- Dualism (Descartes: pineal gland);
“Mind as causal” → contradiction, or epiphenomenalism (X Occam’s Razor)
- The Big Switch (Daniel Dennett, Churchland, Baars, ...)
“Explain” subjective experience objectively → ignores subjectivity (“Easy Problem”);
“Hornswoggle problem” (Churchland)? So is pain just behavior of physical matter?
Ethics?
- Mysterialism (Colin McGinn, S. Pinker?)
Beyond human comprehension; cf. chimp & its cardiovascular system

We’ll further consider realistic (non-dualistic) theories shortly

Defining Consciousness



- Thomas Nagel: An X is conscious iff it's meaningful to ask, "What is it like to be an X"; I.e., what does it *feel* like; E.g., X = bat, vs. X = rock; Opposes the Big Switch: The objective viewpoint leaves out "direct acquaintance"
- Susan Blackmore: If not epiphenomenal, qualia are intrinsic to sentience/sapience; But extant perceiving/thinking AI agents exist, yet surely lack phenomenal consciousness! E.g., our blocks-world agent



Problem Solving in the Blocks World *(Georgiy Platonov, Ben Kane, et al.)*

User: What blocks are to the right of the Target block?

DAVID (avatar); THE TOYOTA BLOCK, BURGER KING BLOCK, AND MCDONALDS BLOCK.

User: How many blocks have I moved since we started?

DAVID: TWO BLOCKS – THE MERCEDES BLOCK AND THE MCDONALDS BLOCK

Why not phenomenally conscious??

- Too simple?
- Lack of "direct acquaintance" (Nagel)?
- No self-reflection on perceptions? (HOT; e.g., McDermott)

Zombies (philosophical)



"You look & act just like me, but experience nothing!"



David Chalmers' Zombie Doppelgaenger

- "Daft"? (Blackmore)
Probably so, if internally (materially) as well as behaviorally identical.
- Partial zombies & the Pretty Hard Problem (LKS, S. Aaronson, D. Chalmers)
 - Deaf person with textual/descriptive-display sunglasses; acting as if hearing;
 - Blind person with "whispering sunglasses"; acting as if sighted;
 - Deaf & blind (cf. Helen Keller), with Morse-code prosthetics;
 - etc. (up to a point)

Also, sleepwalking (Parks, in Toronto); blindsight (Blackmore ch.2).

So, what's the difference between knowing what's being said or what's visible, etc., and experiencing sounds, sights, etc.?

Maybe: symbolic information is qualia-free, while sensory patterns "generate" qualia

consciously attended to?


Troubles with naturalistic theories of consciousness

Epiphenomenalism: Either self-contradictory or redundant;

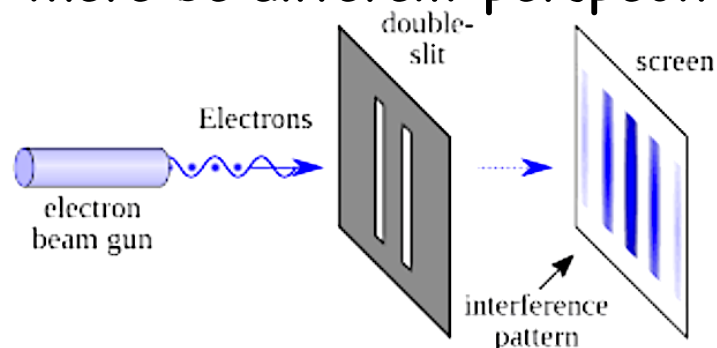
Functionalism: Explanation of brain states & their causal connections suffices → the Big Switch

Delusionism: Physical brain processes cause the illusion of consciousness, qualia, self → Huh?!

Perspectivism (a suggestion): Two perspectives (objective & subjective) on the same reality;

- Our internal models of the world allow for both symbolic and “pattern” information;
- Purely symbolic propositions are communicable (via language) → objectivity
- Propositions containing patterns are ineffable (e.g., (I see )) → subjectivity, qualia
- The neural patterns are analyzable but that’s the objective perspective!

Can there be different perspectives on the same reality? Consider wave / particle duality:



Schrödinger: The electrons are **wavelets (nonzero everywhere)**
Screen (detector array): registers **particles**.

Waves/particles can't sensibly be merged...