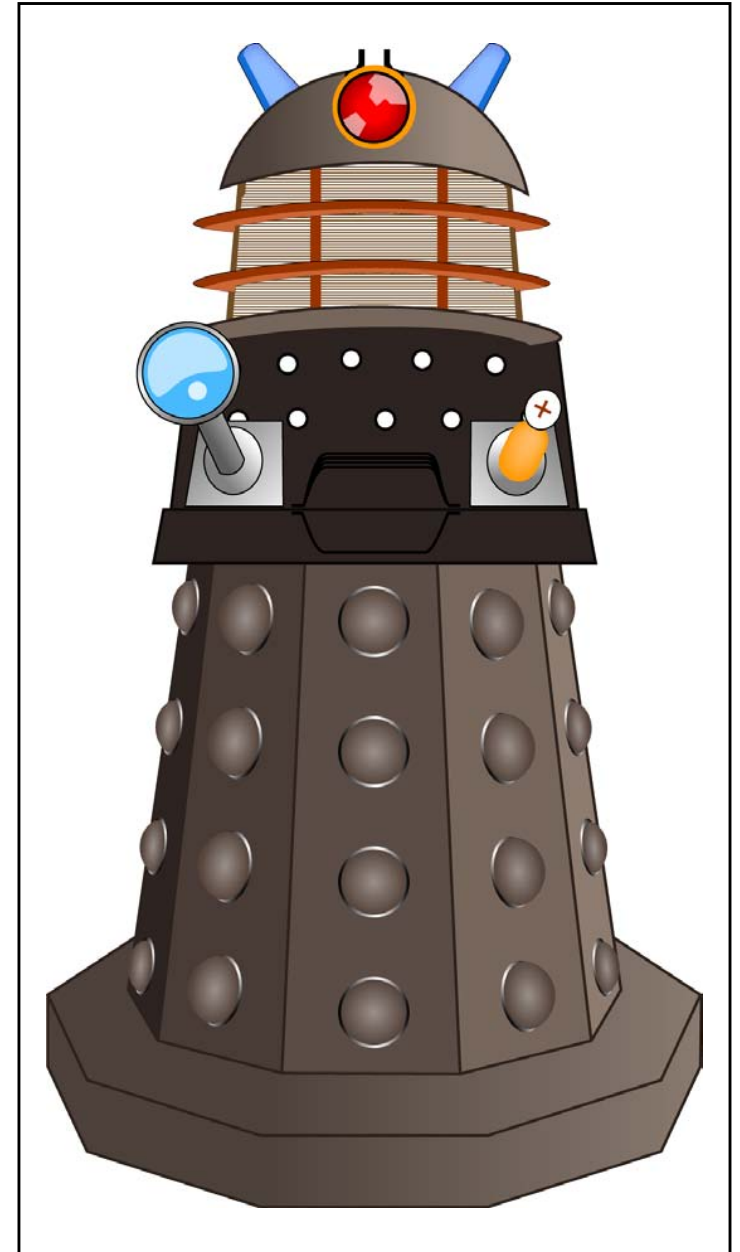


# 24.09 Minds and Machines

## Fall 11 HASS-D CI

behaviorism wrap-up  
the identity theory



# behaviorism: first try

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S is in mental state M iff S behaves in such-and-such ways

e.g. S is in pain iff S writhes, groans, etc.

# philosophical toolkit: dispositions

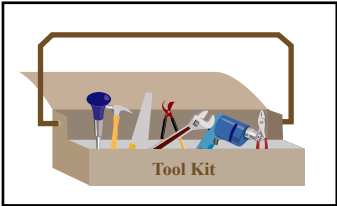


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dispositions (powers, tendencies)

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



Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.

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

# behaviorism: second try

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S is in mental state M iff S is disposed to  
behave in such-and-such ways

e.g. S is in pain iff S is disposed to (has a  
tendency to/is inclined to) writhe, groan, etc.

see Putnam on super-spartans and X-  
worlders

S believes that it's raining iff S is disposed to open an umbrella, wear a raincoat, take shelter, etc.

what's wrong with this?

## three problems

1. a mental state doesn't have 'a fund of behavioral consequences to call its own': what a person does depends on what mental states she is in
2. the special access we have to our own mental states is hard to explain on the behaviorist view
3. aren't mental states the inner causes of behavior?

# the behaviorist confusion

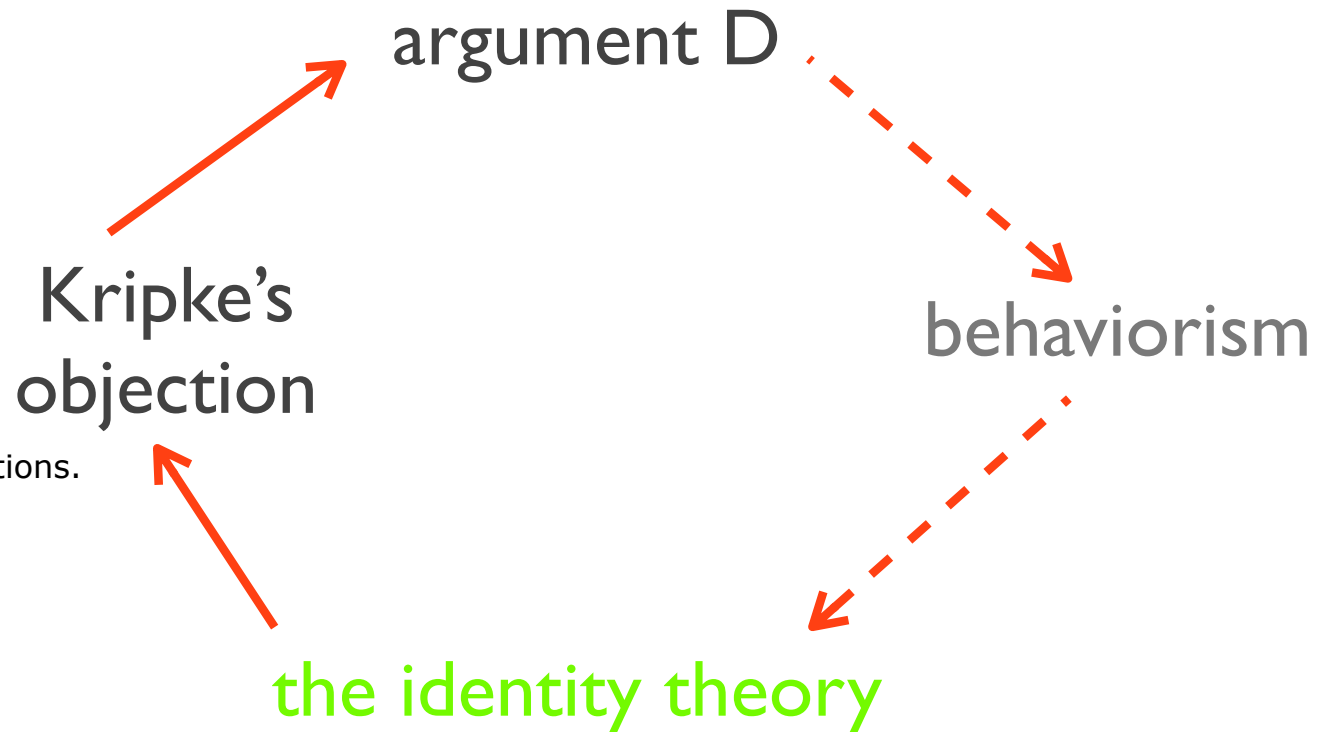
arguably, the behaviorist confuses epistemology  
with metaphysics

how we find out about others' mental states

versus

what mental states are

# roadmap



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what we (apparently) want is an account that identifies mental states with the inner causes of behavior, but which does not identify them with the states of an immaterial 'soul'



# the identity theory

proposed by JJC Smart and UT  
Place in the 1950s

a 'theoretical identity'

water=H<sub>2</sub>O

heat=molecular kinetic energy

pain=c-fibers firing

'c-fibers' is just a placeholder  
for a more realistic candidate

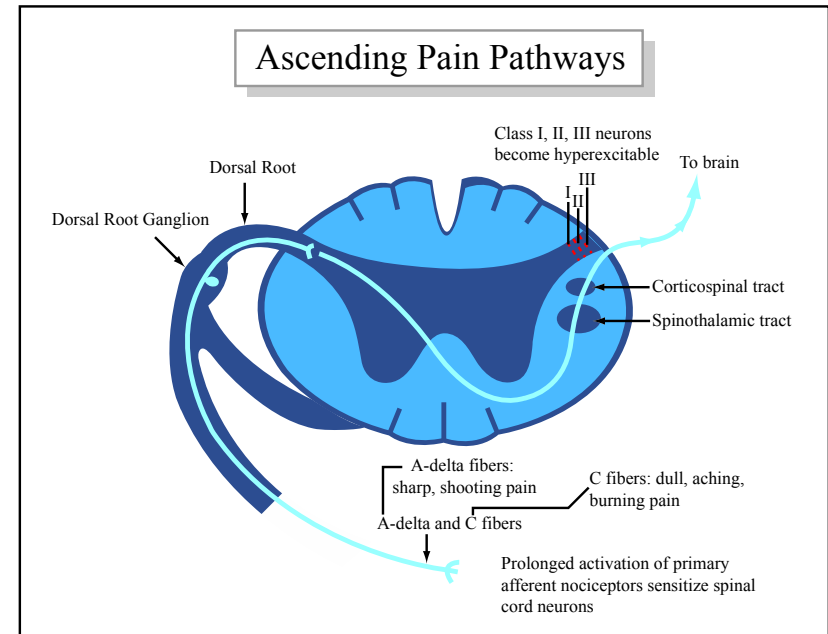


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# Place's brain

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To view U.T. Place's brain, go to <http://www.hss.adelaide.edu.au/philosophy/resources/place/>.

# Ockam's razor

‘the suggestion I wish to resist is...that to say ‘I have a yellowish orange after-image’ is to report something irreducibly psychical. Why do I wish to resist this suggestion? Mainly because of Occam’s razor...That everything should be explicable in terms of physics...except the occurrence of sensations seems to me to be frankly unbelievable. Such sensations would be ‘nomological danglers,’ to use Feigl’s expression.’

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.  
A photograph of JJC Smart.

# William of Ockham

Ockham was a nominalist:  
properties (or ‘universals’)  
don’t exist

‘Ockham’s razor’: entities  
are not to be multiplied  
without necessity

that is, don’t believe in so-  
and-so’s unless you have to



William of Ockham  
(c. 1287-1347)

# identity



an equivalence relation

correlation vs. identity

footprints  $\approx$  the burglar / Bill Sykes = the burglar

‘is’ of predication / identity

Sting is famous / Sting is (=) Gordon Sumner

strict or numerical identity vs. ‘identical twins’

‘analytic’ vs. ‘synthetic’ identities

the shortest bachelor = the shortest adult unmarried male /  
the morning star = the evening star

read Place and Kripke

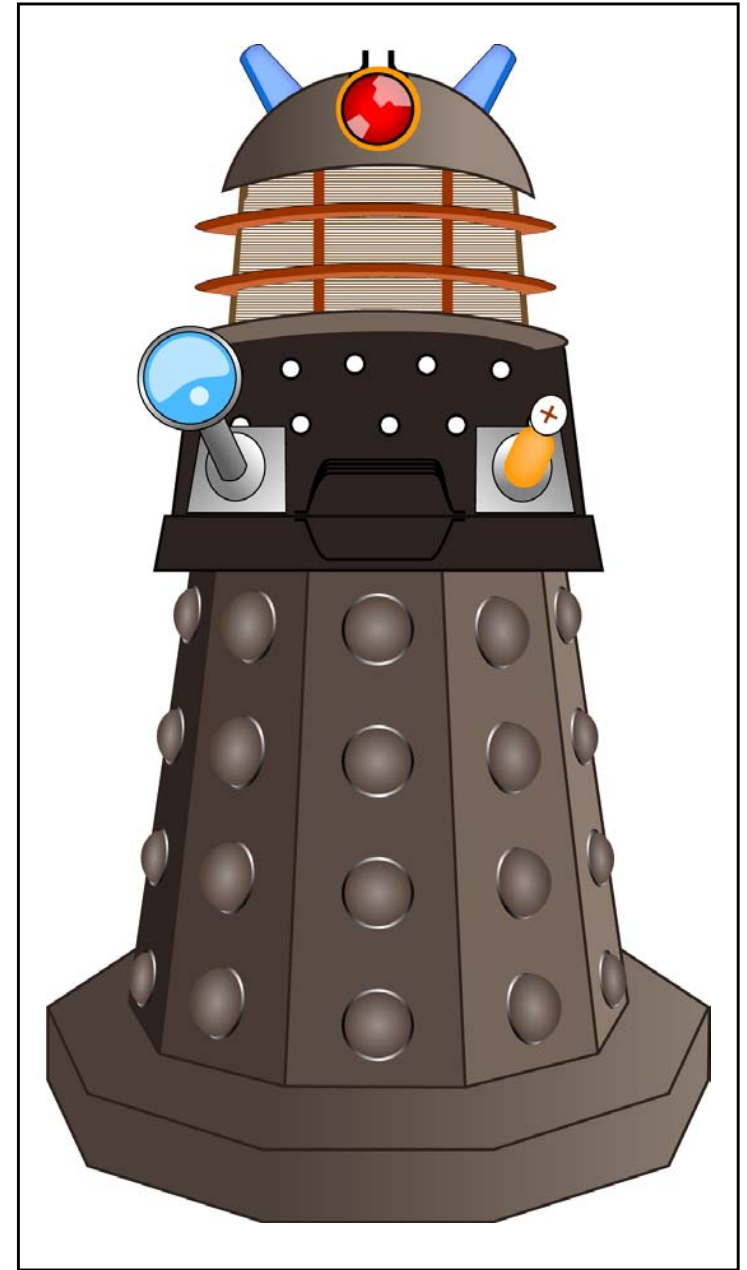


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