

## Physical and metaphysical modality

I'm going to explore the idea that what we philosophers mean by "metaphysical necessity" – or, at any rate, what it's best for us to mean – is simply *physical* necessity. A bit more exactly: We should identify metaphysical necessity with the species of necessity we invoke (usually implicitly) when we try to *explain* stuff. Along the way, I'll try to show how this thesis connects to a lively contemporary debate between Humeans and anti-Humeans about laws of nature, and try to bring out the variety of distinct forms that physical (or as I'll put it: *explanatory*) necessity takes. It will also emerge, naturally, that conceivability isn't in any particularly interesting sense a guide to metaphysical possibility. (Maybe that's a feature, maybe it's a bug....)