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1/19

Jackson argues for the idea of epiphenomenal qualia through three main arguments along with questions regarding the role of qualia. Jackson argues that there are certain sensations or experiences which no amount of physical information can answer fully, because physical information can only explain functional roles and not experiences such as “hurtfulness of pain.” While, Jackson’s argue is compelling, but I am struggling with some of his arguments.

Jackson’s first argument is the “Knowledge Argument,” the idea that there are still more to know even after physical information. In the article, Fred can distinguish two reds that no one else can. The knowledge argument claims that even if we transplant his eyes, the next person may know more about Fred, but it does not necessary mean that know everything about Fred. The Modal Argument examines how physical information cannot confirm consciousness. This claims that Physicalism is restrict to some “possible” worlds, but qualia examines other possible worlds with non-physical features. Jackson’s third argument argues that despite the amount of physical information, it is cannot imagine what it feels like to be something else.

I would agree that Physicalism cannot fully describe the world (or all “possible” worlds), and that quailia provides a way to examine other possibilities that cannot be explain otherwise. However, I would disagree with Jackson’s argument, “Physicalism is false”, because Physicalism has provided valid answers. Also, I am not fully convinced by the optimism argument for qualia. Overall, it is a weak argument for possibilities of existences. For me, I think it is necessary for both to exist, and they are contingent on each other. As a result, I would agree with his statement, “qualia are effects of what goes on in the brain...Qualia cause nothing physical but are cause by something physical” and add that quailia drives to understand itself physically (134).