

# PHILOSOPHY 101

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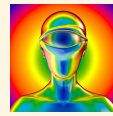
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Physicalism & Consciousness
  - What is Metaphysics?
  - Metaphysical Questions
  - Physics as Metaphysics
  - Alternatives to Physicalism
  - Why be a Physicalist?
  - Proving the Truth of Physicalism
  - Reductionism
  - Reducing Consciousness

# PHYSICALISM & CONSCIOUSNESS

# WHAT IS METAPHYSICS?



GIPHY

# METAPHYSICAL QUESTIONS

- What kinds of things exist?
- What is fundamental?

# PHYSICS AS METAPHYSICS

**Physicalism:**

Everything that is or could exist is ultimately physical in nature

# ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICALISM

## Dualism:

Physical things exist but some things that do (or could) exist are not (or are not ultimately) physical in nature (e.g. minds, souls, God)

## Idealism:

Everything that is or could exist is ultimately *mental* in nature

# WHY BE A PHYSICALIST?

1. Against supernaturalism
2. Explanation



## AGAINST SUPERNATURALISM

- Supernatural explanations are lazy explanations – they don't really tell us anything

## THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPLANATION

1. Our physical theories are highly successful at predicting and controlling our experience of the world
2. If our physical theories are highly successful then they correctly describe the nature of reality
3.  $\therefore$  Our physical theories correctly describe the nature of reality (by 1, 2, MP)
4. If our physical theories correctly describe the nature of reality then physicalism is true
5.  $\therefore$  Physicalism is true (by 3, 4, MP)

# PROVING THE TRUTH OF PHYSICALISM

- Show that our physical theories are not merely *coincidentally* true
- Show that our physical theories are *exhaustively* true

# REDUCTIONISM

Deducing, explaining, or otherwise showing a dependence relation to exist between one set of properties, facts, or concepts, and another privileged set of properties, facts, or concepts.

# REDUCING CONSCIOUSNESS

- Reduce features of conscious experience to matter/energy organized according to physical laws (reduction base)
  - Can we deduce, explain, or otherwise show that conscious experience depends solely on matter/energy operating under physical laws?
  - If the answer is “yes” then we have “reduced” or “given a reduction” of conscious experience in terms of physics

## **The "Hard Problem" of Consciousness:**

Why do the physical processes that characterize life result in conscious experience?

