

PHILOSOPHY 101

FALL 2017

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THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT

QUALIA

Qualia:

properties of at least some experiences (e.g. bodily sensations like pains and tickles) which determines what it is like to subjectively undergo the experience

THREE ARGUMENTS AGAINST PHYSICALISM

1. The “What it's like” Argument
2. The Modal Argument
3. The Knowledge Argument

NAGEL'S ARGUMENT ON "WHAT IT'S LIKE"

Nagel speaks as if the problem he is raising is one of extrapolating from knowledge of one experience to another, of imagining what an unfamiliar experience would be like on the basis of familiar ones...It is hard to see an objection to Physicalism here. Physicalism makes no special claims about the imaginative or extrapolative powers of human beings, and it is hard to see why it need do so. (Jackson, 132)

THE MODAL ARGUMENT

1. If physicalism were true, then the complete physical information about a subject would entail an answer as to whether she was phenomenally conscious
2. But no amount of physical information about a person logically entails that a person is phenomenally conscious—i.e. phenomenal zombies are logically possible
3. \therefore Physicalism is false

OBJECTING TO THE MODAL ARGUMENT

- Premise (2) is very controversial
 - only people who are antecedently suspicious of physicalism would be likely to agree with (2)
- Anti-physicalists need an argument whose premises are not going to seem as controversial to someone sympathetic to physicalism

THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT

Mary is a brilliant scientist who is, for whatever reason, forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She specialises in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires, let us suppose, all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like 'red', 'blue', and so on....What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a colour television monitor? Will she learn anything or not? (Jackson, 130)

It seems just obvious that she will learn something about the world and our visual experience of it. But then it is inescapable that her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. Ergo there is more to have than that, and Physicalism is false (Jackson, 130).

