

Epiphenomenal Qualia

By Frank Jackson (1943-)

Physicalism

- Science has given us a great deal of information about ourselves.
- “All correct information is physical information.”

Qualia

- The scent of a rose, the blue of the sky, the itchiness of an itch, the finer things in life...
- “Tell me everything physical there is to tell about what is going on in a living brain, the kind of states, their functional role, their relation to what goes on at other times and in other brains... and be I as clever as can in fitting it all together, you won’t have told me about the hurtfulness of pains, the itchiness of itches, pangs of jealousy, or about the characteristic experience of tasting a lemon, smelling a rose...”
- “Therefore, Physicalism is false.”

I. Knowledge Argument for Qualia

- Fred sees a two different colors of red for ripe and unripe tomatoes like we see the difference in blue and yellow.
- We can study his brain all we want, and we may find out exactly how his brain processes colors and why they seem different (maybe he has an extra cone in there, or something), but we will never know what it's *like* for him to see.
- Therefore, we don't know everything about Fred.
- "Physicalism leaves something out."

II. The Modal Argument

- “No amount of physical information about another *logically entails* that he or she is conscious.”
- Exact physical replicas (i.e. *Blade Runner*) with no consciousness.
- “Consequently there is more to us than purely physical.”

III. The “What is it like to be” Argument



- We can never know what it is like to be a bat, or Charlie Sheen. This is a privilege only they can enjoy.
- “No amount of knowledge about Fred, be it physical or not, amounts to knowledge ‘from the inside’ concerning Fred.”
- Different from knowledge argument.

IV. The Bogey of Epiphenomenalism

- Qualia has no effect on the physical world.
- A does not necessarily cause B , they can be two “distinct effects of a common underlying causal process.”
- Polar Bears as Darwinian conundrum.
- Qualia is a by-product of what is conducive to survival.

Questions

- Is there really no way of scientifically explaining the way a sunset makes us feel?
- Is Jackson fully refuting Physicalism, or is Qualia holding him over until science proves him wrong?