

# EPIPHENOMENAL QUALIA

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# THEORIES OF MIND

- **Dualism:** Minds and bodies are separate entities; minds are thinking and non-physical, while bodies are mechanical and physical.
- **Behaviorism:** All things that an organism does (acting, thinking, feeling) should be regarded as behavior, from which meaning can be drawn.
- **Materialism:** Matter is the only substance in our world; and its interactions are the source of reality.
- **Functionalism:** The mind is the software of the brain.

# WHAT IS QUALIA?

- Qualia: The subjective or quantitative properties of experiences

For example...

The way it feels to smell a rose



# EPIPHENOMENAL QUALIA

- Qualia are the byproducts of casual interactions on the physical level.
- The mind undergoes some experiences that are purely physical, but also many that contain qualia and cannot be explained by knowledge alone.
- Consciousness lies outside the physical world.

# THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT AND FRED

- Fred has the best color vision in the world, because he has a very sensitive optical system that can distinguish between more color wavelengths than we can.
- Fred can split a batch of ripe tomatoes into two groups with complete consistency.
- Fred sees the tomatoes as two different colors; Red<sub>1</sub> and Red<sub>2</sub>, and they are as different to him as yellow and blue are to everyone else.

# THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

- Since Fred can clearly distinguish between Red<sub>1</sub> and Red<sub>2</sub>, as tested with the tomatoes, Jackson deducts that he must be seeing at least one more color than we can.
- To deny the existence of this extra color would be to make the same mistake as the blind in HG Wells' "The Country Of the Blind".
- Just because we don't have this sense doesn't mean it doesn't exist.



# FRED AND PHYSICALISM

- We know all of the physical information about Fred; his behavior, dispositions, physiology, history, and relations, but we still can't know what Red<sub>2</sub> is like.
- Therefore, Physicalism does not explain everything about him.
- If Fred's optical system was transplanted into someone else, this other would finally know what Fred has experienced throughout his life.
- If we had known everything about him through physical information, there would be no insight gained about his experience.

# THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT AND MARY

- Mary is a brilliant scientist who knows every physical quality about the world; the way wavelength combinations from the sky stimulate the retina, etc, and sits in a black and white room all day watching a film of the world on a black and white television.
- If Mary is given a color television monitor instead, it seems obvious that she would learn through the experience of actually seeing colors.
- Mary knew all the physical information prior to the color television, but learned from seeing the colors. therefore, physicalism is false.

# THE MODAL ARGUMENT

- “No amount of physical information about another *logically entails* that he or she is conscious or feels anything at all (130).”
- Therefore, a world with beings exactly like us in every physical respect but have no conscious mental life (zombies) is possible.
- Physicalism would draw the conclusion that an individual and his zombie are exactly alike; but this is clearly not true.
- Therefore, physicalism is false.

# NAGEL: “WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE?”

- Jackson addresses Thomas Nagel’s question, “What is it like to be a bat?”, to which there is no physical answer.



# QUESTIONS

- Why doesn't Jackson consider the colors of Mary's skin, hair, and clothes in his Knowledge Argument?
- Why do you think Jackson mentions and retorts against Modal and Nagel's arguments, if they generally coincide with his own conclusion? Do you think he was right to do so?
- Is epiphenomenalism appealing to you?
- Any other questions you may have..