The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

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Course: Philosophy of mind

Filosofia e Forme del sapere A.A. 2023/2024

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Course materials**:

- Frank Jackson, “Ephiphenomal Qualia”, *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32, 1982, pp. 127-136 (the article can be also found in D. Chalmers (ed.) *Philosophy of Mind. Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 273-281.)

- Frank Jackson, “What Mary didn’t Know”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83, 1986, pp. 291-295.

- Brian Loar, “Phenomenal States (Second Version)”, in D. Chalmers (ed.) *Philosophy of Mind. Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 295-311.

- **Secondary literature**:

- Martine Nida-Rümelin and Donnchadh O’Conaill, “Qualia: The Knowledge Argument”, in E.N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-knowledge/index.html

- Tim Crane, *Elements of the Mind*, Oxford University Press 2001, chap. 3 “Consciousness”, pp. 70-101.

- ***The slides*** will be publicly available to you at the end of the course. I can help providing some of the course materials, if needed (write at psalis@unica.it).

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- The texts:
- “Epiphenomal Qualia” is the first short paper in which **Frank Jackson** presents the ‘knowledge argument’ (KA) against physicalism in the philosophy of mind;
- “What Mary didn’t Know” is another short paper in which **Jackson** clarified his views on the KA in reply to some remarks and objections;
- “Phenomenal States (Second Version)” is one of the many influent replies to the KA, in which **Brian Loar** spells out an interpretation of the KA according to which we have ‘special concepts’ called ‘phenomenal concepts’ that are useful to talk about phenomenal experiences, states, and qualities. This strategy, we’ll see, contrasts the anti-physicalist implications of the KA.

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- The texts:

- Secondary literature:
- Martine Nida-Rümelin and Donnchadh O'Conaill, "Qualia: The Knowledge Argument", in E.N. Zalta (ed.) The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia-knowledge/index.html

- Tim Crane, *Elements of the Mind*, Oxford University Press 2001, chap. 3 "Consciousness", pp. 70-101.*

- *For those interested, Crane's book is available in *Italian translation* by Raffaello Cortina Editore, with the title *Fenomeni mentali*.

- These materials could be the focus of students' seminars* at the end of the course.

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- FROM THE SYLLABUS: https://unica.esse3.cineca.it/auth/docente/DefinizioneOfferta/DettaglioAttivitaDidatticaDocente.do;jsessionid=882D97381D1F447737B2E9E748A119E2.esse3-unica-prod-01?AA_OFF_ID=2023&CDS_ID=11068&AD_ID=21921

- Written exam (optional):

- Argumentative skills (33%); Good writing in terms of syntactic correctness and proper terminology (34%); Text elaboration skills (33);

- Oral exam:

- Mastery of the concepts and arguments of the course (30%); Understanding of the theoretical categories and key problems of the course (30%); Theoretical and contextual framing of the topic of the course (10%); The capacity to reason by means of the course's key categories (30%).

- Exams will be **in Italian** (apart from international students; in this case, exams will be in English).
- N.B. International students who master the Italian language may choose between Italian and English.

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- **Visiting Professor Seminars**

- Prof. Miguel Angel Sebastian, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), will deliver two seminars connected with this course:

- *Perspectival Information and the Knowledge Argument*

(April 8th, 10.05-11.35, Room 13);

- *Points of View and Subjectivity in Experience*

(April 10th, 16.00-19.00, Aula Magna Motzo).

Students who attend at least one of the meetings and write a 4-5-page report written in Italian (to be sent to me) will have the opportunity to acquire 1 CFU (F or D).

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- **The inventor of the knowledge argument**

- Frank Jackson (1943-)
- Australian analytic philosopher
- Works at Australian National University (ANU)
- His interests include epistemology, metaphysics, meta-ethics and philosophy of mind

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- **The defender of the 'phenomenal concepts strategy'**

- Brian Loar (1939-2014) was a US philosopher.
- He taught at Rutgers University.
- His 'phenomenal concepts strategy' is one of the interesting physicalist replies to the KA (no spoilers). The strategy is devoted to defending physicalism from the KA.

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- **The phenomenal aspects of experience**

- The KA is one of the most relevant arguments in the debate concerning the metaphysics of mind, especially in highlighting how certain strong ‘intuitions’ go against materialism;

- For example, ‘**the peculiar feel**’ of our conscious experiences is what the philosopher Thomas Nagel highlighted with his famous paper on ‘what it is like to be a bat’ (1974);

- As bats are blind and exploit a kind of sonar to successfully explore and navigate their environment, just imagining the qualitative feel of their experiences appears *especially alien* to us, hitting the limits of our imagination. This highlights the *radically subjective character* of such experiences. Can we imagine what it is like to be a bat?

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- **Twins deprived of consciousness?**

- Another famous argument highlighting the limits of a materialist explanation of consciousness is the **argument from zombies**;

- Can we conceive of our physically perfect duplicates who lack consciousness? It is *controversial* that being able to conceive them makes them metaphysically possible, but many believe in the goodness of arguments and intuitions like this, and they end up accepting the possibility of zombies;

- This is the special challenge pushed by David Chalmers: if we can conceive such duplicates, then materialism is insufficient to explain consciousness; also, according to this possibility, the metaphysical relationship between mind and body leans towards 'some kind' of **dualism** (property dualism) as the body is insufficient to determine mindedness;

- We must explain **two different kinds of minds** based on the same physical background: if the same body does not yield consciousness for both, then consciousness is something more, which cannot be explained physically.

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- **Two kinds of consciousness**

- Ned Block (1995) has forcefully argued that we must distinguish between *two fundamental types of consciousness*:

- **Access consciousness (AC)**:

- Capacity to entertain thoughts, perceptions, and representations and to be poised to exploit them in action plans, or more generally, the whole of information available to the cognitive system for the purposes of *action control*, *reasoning*, and *speech;* AC permits readiness to think and readiness to act;

- **Phenomenal consciousness (PC)**:

- Capacity to enjoy the quality of the feel typical of many of our perceptual and phenomenally relevant experiences, like 'enjoying the redness of that sunset' or 'the tastiness of that food', etc. More in general, it concerns subjective experiences and feelings and their qualitative aspects; PC is all about the 'feel' of experiences.

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- **Qualia**

- Qualia are supposed to be instances of subjective or qualitative experiences, e.g., the sensation of a particular pain (or pleasure), a headache, and the like; Daniel Dennett (1985) defined them as “an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: the ways things seem to us”;

- According to Dennett, qualia can be defined according to **four main features**:

- Qualia are ‘**ineffable**’: these states cannot be communicated or apprehended without direct experiences;
- Qualia are ‘**intrinsic**’: these states are non-relational, that is, they do not modify depending on the experience’s relation to other states or properties;
- Qualia are ‘**private**’: these states are constitutively personal and therefore all interpersonal comparisons of qualia are impossible;
- Qualia are ‘**objects of direct/immediate apprehension**’ by consciousness: to experience a certain quale Q is to know all there is to know about Q.

- As these definitions raise many metaphysical problems, many philosophers argue that **for the purposes of the understanding and explanation of the mind, we can settle with talk of ‘phenomenal properties, states, or qualities’** as these formulas seem to involve less controversial baggage. So, from now on, phenomenal properties or states are what matter.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- It is undeniable that the physical, chemical and biological sciences have provided a great deal of information about the world we live in and about ourselves. I will use the label 'physical information' for this kind of information, and also for information that automatically comes along with it. For example, if a medical scientist tells me enough about the processes that go on in my nervous system, and about how they relate to happenings in the world around me, to what has happened in the past and is likely to happen in the future, to what happens to other similar and dissimilar organisms, and the like, he or she tells me — if I am clever enough to fit it together appropriately — about what is often called the functional role of those states in me (and in organisms in general in similar cases). This information, and its kin, I also label 'physical' (p. 127).

- Here, Jackson starts with a 'sketchy' definition of what counts *in this* paper (and *in this* argument) as 'physical information' (this is because there are general problems in giving this definition in wider terms).
- It is basically the information we produced thanks to the **work done in the natural sciences**. Also, **functionalist types of understanding** of some mental processes can count as physical information. According to functionalism, a certain state is identified by the causal role it plays in a cognitive system. These are wrapped in the middle of transitions from certain (perceptual) inputs to certain (behavioural) outputs.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I do not mean these sketchy remarks to constitute a definition of 'physical information', and of the correlative notions of physical property, process, and so on, but to indicate what I have in mind here. It is well known that there are problems with giving a precise definition of these notions, and so of the thesis of Physicalism that all (correct) information is physical information. But — unlike some — I take the question of definition to cut across the central problems I want to discuss in this paper (p. 127).

- Since the problematic definition of ‘physical information’ is pivotal to the topic of this paper, however, and since it is a necessary condition to discuss the general doctrine of physicalism, we must start somewhere: the former sketchy definition is indeed the starting point.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I am what is sometimes known as a "qualia freak". I think that there are certain features of the bodily sensations especially, but also of certain perceptual experiences, which no amount of purely physical information includes. 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 so on and so forth, and be I as clever as can be 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, hearing a loud noise or seeing the sky (p. 127).

- Jackson jokes about his view as presenting himself as a ‘qualia freak’: a person who believes in the irreducible nature of mental qualitative experiences (see qualia def. above).
- Jackson challenges the reader **to show how neural and functional descriptions can account for the very qualities of our experiences** (i.e., the peculiar ‘feel’ that systematically accompanies them).

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- There are many qualia freaks, and some of them say that their rejection of Physicalism is an unargued intuition. I think that they are being unfair to themselves. They have the following argument. Nothing you could tell of a physical sort captures the smell of a rose, for instance. Therefore, Physicalism is false. By our lights this is a perfectly good argument. It is obviously not to the point to question its validity, and the premise is intuitively obviously true both to them and to me (pp. 127-28).

- Jackson acknowledges he is not alone in defending the irreducible relevance of qualia, but he wants to urge that **it is not true that qualia defenders have no arguments and just rely on intuition**.
- Jackson argues: Nothing physical is successful in capturing 'the smell of a rose, for instance'. Hence, physicalism, as incomplete, is false (so **not all information is physical information** in the def. above).
- The first premise of the argument is, however, presented as **'intuitively' true** (see below).

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I must, however, admit that it is weak from a polemical point of view. There are, unfortunately for us, many who do not find the premise intuitively obvious. The task then is to present an argument whose premises are obvious to all, or at least to as many as possible. This I try to do in §I with what I will call "the Knowledge argument". In §II I contrast the Knowledge argument with the Modal argument and in §III with the "What is it like to be" argument. In §IV I tackle the question of the causal role of qualia. The major factor in stopping people from admitting qualia is the belief that they would have to be given a causal role with respect to the physical world and especially the brain; and it is hard to do this without sounding like someone who believes in fairies. I seek in §IV to turn this objection by arguing that the view that qualia are epiphenomenal is a perfectly possible one (p. 128).

- Jackson acknowledges how the 'intuitive' standard argument is **not so successful** and declares that he wants to propose a more successful one. Finally, he provides the structure and contents of the paper.
- **Epiphenomenalism**: Regarding the mind-body problem, epiphenomenalism maintains that although subjective mental processes have **no control over physical events (no causal influence on them)**, they are **entirely dependent** on comparable physical and biochemical activities occurring within the human body to exist.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- People vary considerably in their ability to discriminate colours. Suppose that in an experiment to catalogue this variation Fred is discovered. Fred has better colour vision than anyone else on record; he makes every discrimination that anyone has ever made, and moreover he makes one that we cannot even begin to make. Show him a batch of ripe tomatoes and he sorts them into two roughly equal groups and does so with complete consistency. That is, if you blindfold him, shuffle the tomatoes up, and then remove the blindfold and ask him to sort them out again, he sorts them into exactly the same two groups (p. 128).

- Fred's superhuman discriminatory capacities: consider Fred, who can sort red tomatoes into two categories – that cannot be distinguished by us – and who's completely reliable in applying such capacity (so the categories are not mere fantasy).
- **Question**: If only Fred can sort out these (putative) colors, how can someone else assess whether he does it consistently? Is it *just* Fred's word for it?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- We ask Fred how he does it. He explains that all ripe tomatoes do not look the same colour to him, and in fact that this is true of a great many objects that we classify together as red. He sees two colours where we see one, and he has in consequence developed for his own use two words ‘red$_1$’ and 'red$_2$' to mark the difference. Perhaps he tells us that he has often tried to teach the difference between red$_1$ and red$_2$ to his friends but has got nowhere and has concluded that the rest of the world is red$_1$-red$_2$ colourblind — or perhaps he has had partial success with his children, it doesn’t matter (p. 128).

- Fred sees two colours where we see one; we are therefore colourblind about the distinction that he draws between red$_1$ and red$_2$. Furthermore, he is unable to teach the difference to anyone else.
- N.B. This is a ‘thought experiment’, and **it is controversial that we can establish philosophical points** or theses based on them. Furthermore, exploiting ‘thought experiments’ in metaphysics means **doing armchair philosophy**, and **believing that we can establish metaphysical truths ‘from the armchair’.** Also, this feature is debated and controversial. Jackson defended the viability of armchair philosophy and thought experiments in his book *From Metaphysics to Ethics* (OUP 1998).

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- In any case he explains to us that it would be quite wrong to think that because 'red' appears in both ‘red$_1$’ and ‘red$_2$’ that the two colours are shades of the one colour. He only uses the common term 'red' to fit more easily into our restricted usage. To him red$_1$ and red$_2$ are as different from each other and all the other colours as yellow is from blue. And his discriminatory behaviour bears this out: he sorts red$_1$ from red$_2$ tomatoes with the greatest of ease in a wide variety of viewing circumstances (p. 128).

- The difference between red$_1$ and red$_2$ cannot be reduced to a difference in shades of red. For Fred re$_1$ and red$_2$ are just two different colours.
- **Question**: Is this an example that fits what we know about the world? Is this example possible, according to what we know?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- Moreover, an investigation of the physiological basis of Fred's exceptional ability reveals that Fred's optical system is able to separate out two groups of wave-lengths in the red spectrum as sharply as we are able to sort out yellow from blue (pp. 128-29).

- *Let us accept,* for the sake of the argument, that there is an empirical investigation into Fred's visual system that certifies that he is able to sort two types of reds as we sort different colours.
- **Question**: Can science-fictional empirical investigations help establish philosophical points or views?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- I think that we should admit that Fred can see, really see, at least one more colour than we can; red_1 is a different colour from red_2. We are to Fred as a totally red-green colour-blind person is to us. H. G. Wells' story "The Country of the Blind" is about a sighted person in a totally blind community. This person never manages to convince them that he can see, that he has an extra sense. They ridicule this sense as quite inconceivable, and treat his capacity to avoid falling into ditches, to win fights and so on as precisely that capacity and nothing more. We would be making their mistake if we refused to allow that Fred can see one more colour than we can (p. 129).

- Jackson exploits Well's story about the sighted man in the country of blind people to highlight our situation, in which Fred's abilities appear, as well as in the story, inconceivable.
- **Question**: Is Well's story conceivable? Could people be born, for example, into a totally blind community?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- What kind of experience does Fred have when he sees red_1 and red_2? What is the new colour or colours like? We would dearly like to know but do not; and it seems that no amount of physical information about Fred's brain and optical system tells us. We find out perhaps that Fred's cones [cone cells] respond differentially to certain light waves in the red section of the spectrum that make no difference to ours (or perhaps he has an extra cone) and that this leads in Fred to a wider range of those brain states responsible for visual discriminatory behaviour. But none of this tells us what we really want to know about his colour experience (p. 129).

- Whatever the scientific description of what is going on in Fred's case, we would not be able to account for the 'feel' of Fred's experience concerning red objects (i.e., the fact that he perceives red_1 things as different from red_2 ones). Hence, according to Jackson, **there is something structurally limited about how much our scientific accounts of the world can explain human conscious experiences**.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- There is something about it we don't know. But we know, we may suppose, everything about Fred's body, his behaviour and dispositions to behaviour and about his internal physiology, and everything about his history and relation to others that can be given in physical accounts of persons. We have all the physical information. Therefore, knowing all this is *not* knowing everything about Fred. It follows that Physicalism leaves something out (p. 129).

- The aspect concerning 'the feel' of such experiences is still to be accounted for, and our scientific descriptions are **incomplete** from that point of view.
- Even with all the physical information at our disposal, **we still could not explain** those subjective, irreducible aspects. Knowing 'everything physical' about Fred is not knowing 'everything' about Fred. Physicalism is, therefore, incomplete (and this is Jackson's favourite conclusion).
- **Question**: What does it mean to know anything 'nonphysical'?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- To reinforce this conclusion, imagine that as a result of our investigations into the internal workings of Fred we find out how to make everyone's physiology like Fred's in the relevant respects; or perhaps Fred donates his body to science and on his death we are able to transplant his optical system into someone else — again the fine detail doesn't matter. The important point is that such a happening would create enormous interest. People would say, "At last we will know what it is like to see the extra colour, at last we will know how Fred has differed from us in the way he has struggled to tell us about for so long". Then it cannot be that we knew all along all about Fred. But *ex hypothesi* we did know all along everything about Fred that features in the physicalist scheme; hence the physicalist scheme leaves something out (p. 129).

- Jackson elaborates further on the last point, i.e., the physical description of what is going on *leaves something out*. He proposes variations of the example: transplants of Fred's visual system or even the possibility to tweak our systems to behave like Fred's.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- Put it this way. *After* the operation, we will know *more* about Fred and especially about his colour experiences. But beforehand we had all the physical information we could desire about his body and brain, and indeed everything that has ever featured in physicalist accounts of mind and consciousness. Hence there is more to know than all that. Hence Physicalism is incomplete (pp. 120-130).

- Here's Jackson's point, fully made explicit:
- 1) I have all the physical information about Fred;
- 2) then I undergo a surgical operation, and Fred's visual system is implanted in me;
- 3) thanks to this, I come to know 'more than before' about Fred;
- 4) but I knew all the physical information;
- 5) hence, the physical information is not enough (and physicalism is incomplete), i.e., what I learn is nonphysical.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- Fred and the new colour(s) are of course essentially rhetorical devices. The same point can be made with normal people and familiar colours. 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 (p. 130).

- Jackson declares the rethorical nature of Fred's example (which requires a bit of science fiction). Then he changes the main example, introducing **Mary's case** (the protagonist of the KA).

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- She discovers, for example, just which wave-length combinations from the sky stimulate the retina, and exactly how this produces *via* the central nervous system the contraction of the vocal chords and expulsion of air from the lungs that results in the uttering of the sentence 'The sky is blue'. (It can hardly be denied that it is in principle possible to obtain all this physical information from black and white television, otherwise the Open University would of necessity need to use colour television.) (p. 130)

- This part completes Mary's basic description.
- **Questions**: Is it possible to meaningfully talk of colours in a completely black and white context? Would'nt we **just lack the very concept of colour**? Is it plausible to attribute concepts that are basically *alien* to their proper context of application?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- 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? 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 (p. 130).

- Jackson goes straight to the point of Mary's example: What happens if Mary is allowed to leave her black and white room? Will she learn anything new? Will she be able to notice colours for the first time?
- If she learns something new, then her previous physical knowledge is incomplete. Hence, there is more than that, and physicalism is false.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- I. THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT FOR QUALIA
- Clearly the same style of Knowledge argument could be deployed for taste, hearing, the bodily sensations and generally speaking for the various mental states which are said to have (as it is variously put) raw feels, phenomenal features or qualia. The conclusion in each case is that the qualia are left out of the physicalist story. And the polemical strength of the Knowledge argument is that it is so hard to deny the central claim that one can have all the physical information without having all the information there is to have (p. 130).

- Jackson concludes the section by summarising the intuitive strengths of the knowledge argument: "it is so hard to deny the central claim that one can have all the physical information without having all the information there is to have".
- **Question**: What is 'nonphysical information' supposed to be?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- II. THE MODAL ARGUMENT
- By the Modal Argument I mean an argument of the following style. Sceptics about other minds are not making a mistake in deductive logic, whatever else may be wrong with their position. No amount of physical information about another *logically entails* that he or she is conscious or feels anything at all. Consequently there is a possible world with organisms exactly like us in every physical respect (and remember that includes functional states, physical history, *et al*.) but which differ from us profoundly in that they have no conscious mental life at all (130).

- The Modal Argument is exploited by Jackson as anticipating the possibility of our physical copies lacking consciousness, i.e., those that will be known as Chalmers' zombies.
- The argument is modal since it is based on 'possibilia' like possible worlds.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- II. THE MODAL ARGUMENT
- But then what is it that we have and they lack? Not anything physical *ex hypothesi*. In all physical regards we and they are exactly alike. Consequently there is more to us than the purely physical. Thus Physicalism is false (pp. 130-31).

- Jackson argues for the falsity of physicalism based on the possibility of zombies.
- Hence, as the story goes, consciousness does not reduce to physically explainable phenomena. **Question**: What is needed to explain consciousness?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- II. THE MODAL ARGUMENT
- It is sometimes objected that the Modal argument misconceives Physicalism on the ground that that doctrine is advanced as a *contingent* truth. But to say this is only to say that physicalists restrict their claim to *some* possible worlds, including especially ours; and the Modal argument is only directed against this lesser claim. If we in *our* world, let alone beings in any others, have features additional to those of our physical replicas in other possible worlds, then we have non-physical features or qualia (p. 131).

- Physicalists reject the argument as based on a 'contingent reading' of physicalism; this entails that physicalism is bound to be true for some possible worlds and not for others.
- There is in fact another reading according to which laws of nature are fixed for all possible worlds, that is, worlds in which physical laws do not obtain are impossible worlds.
- N.B. Jackson here ventures to claim directly that qualia are 'non-physical' features. **Question**: What are non-physical features?

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- II. THE MODAL ARGUMENT
- The trouble rather with the Modal argument is that it rests on a disputable modal intuition. Disputable because it is disputed. Some sincerely deny that there can be physical replicas of us in other possible worlds which nevertheless lack consciousness. Moreover, at least one person who once had the intuition now has doubts […] (p. 131).

- Jackson fairly acknowledges the main problem of the modal argument: the underlying modal intuition is controversial and contested.
- According to this reply, zombies, even though they are 'conceivable', are not 'metaphysically possible'. Hence, conceivability is not a secure guide to possibility.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- II. THE MODAL ARGUMENT
- Of course, *qua* protagonists of the Knowledge argument we may well accept the modal intuition in question; but this will be a *consequence* of our already having an argument to the conclusion that qualia are left out of the physicalist story, not our ground for that conclusion. Moreover, the matter is complicated by the possibility that the connection between matters physical and qualia is like that sometimes held to obtain between aesthetic qualities and natural ones. Two possible worlds which agree in all "natural“ respects (including the experiences of sentient creatures) must agree in all aesthetic qualities also, but it is plausibly held that the aesthetic qualities cannot be reduced to the natural (p. 131).

- Due to the latter controversy, here the modal argument is not supposed to do any relevant work (even though Jackson is among those who accept its modal intuition).
- The knowledge argument, therefore, claims to be good independently of the goodness of the modal argument.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- In "What is it like to be a bat?" Thomas Nagel argues that no amount of physical information can tell us what it is like to be a bat, and indeed that we, human beings, cannot imagine what it is like to be a bat. His reason is that what this is like can only be understood from a bat's point of view, which is not our point of view and is not something capturable in physical terms which are essentially terms understandable equally from many points of view (pp. 131-32).

- Nagel's argument is one about points of view. Points of view cannot be reduced (captured, explained) in physicalist terms; hence, the 'feel' of such experiences escapes physicalist explanations.
- The 'what is it like' aspect of conscious experience, that is, phenomenal consciousness, requires a first-person perspective and escapes a third personal scientific approach.

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- It is important to distinguish this argument from the Knowledge argument. When I complained that all the physical knowledge about Fred was not enough to tell us what his special colour experience was like, I was not complaining that we weren't finding out what it is like to be Fred. I was complaining that there is something *about* his experience, a property of it, of which we were left ignorant (p. 132).

- Jackson specifies the difference between Nagel's argument and the knowledge argument: one thing is to say that physics does not tell one 'what is it like to be' Fred (Nagel's argument); quite another is to say that physics does not tell one about the properties of Fred's experiences (Jackson's argument).

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- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- And if and when we come to know what this property is we still will not know what it is like to *be* Fred, but we will know more *about* him. No amount of knowledge about Fred, be it physical or not, amounts to knowledge "from the inside" concerning Fred. We are not Fred. There is thus a whole set of items of knowledge expressed by forms of words like 'that it is *I myself* who is . . .' which Fred has and we simply cannot have because we are not him (p. 132).

- The properties of Fred's experience, Jackson goes on, do not suffice to account for what is to be Fred.
- 'What is it like to be Fred?' is a situation accessible only from Fred's perspective.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- When Fred sees the colour he alone can see, one thing he knows is the way his experience of it differs from his experience of seeing red and so on, *another* is that he himself is seeing it. Physicalist and qualia freaks alike should acknowledge that no amount of information of whatever kind that *others* have *about* Fred amounts to knowledge of the second. My complaint though concerned the first and was that the special quality of his experience is certainly a fact about it, and one which Physicalism leaves out because no amount of physical information told us what it is (p. 132).

- Jackson further clarifies how the knowledge argument differs from Nagel's. The knowledge argument only concerns the incapability of physicalism to explain the features of Fred's perceptual experience.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- 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. In terms of Hume's example, from knowledge of some shades of blue we can work out what it would be like to see other shades of blue. Nagel argues that the trouble with bats *et al*. is that they are too unlike us. 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 (p. 132).

- Jackson admits some dissatisfaction with Nagel's point. The fact that bats' experiences are too alien for our imaginative capacities is not enough to object to physicalism.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- III. THE "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE" ARGUMENT
- Anyway, our Knowledge argument makes no assumptions on this point. If Physicalism were true, enough physical information about Fred would obviate any need to extrapolate or to perform special feats of imagination or understanding in order to know all about his special colour experience. *The information would already be in our possession*. But it clearly isn't. That was the nub of the argument (p. 132).

- We need not make imaginative efforts to claim that Fred's experience is not explainable in physicalist terms. So the knowledge argument should not be confused with these claims about powers of imagination.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- Is there any really *good* reason for refusing to countenance the idea that qualia are causally impotent with respect to the physical world? I will argue for the answer no, but in doing this I will say nothing about two views associated with the classical epiphenomenalist position (p. 133).

- Epiphenomenalism is the view that the mind, though depending causally on physical phenomena, is not per se causally efficient. Jackson asks himself if there is a compelling reason to reject the view that qualia are causally impotent in relation to the physical world and declares he wants to give a negative answer.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- The first is that mental *states* are inefficacious with respect to the physical world. All I will be concerned to defend is that it is possible to hold that certain *properties* of certain mental states, namely those I've called qualia, are such that their possession or absence makes no difference to the physical world. The second is that the mental is *totally* causally inefficacious. For all I will say it may be that you have to hold that the instantiation of *qualia* makes a difference to *other mental states* though not to anything physical. Indeed general considerations to do with how you could come to be aware of the instantiation of qualia suggest such a position (p. 133).

- These are the typical epiphenomenalist points Jackson wants to avoid: 1) Jackson' epiphenomenalism just concerns qualia – hence, qualia must be causally inefficacious; 2) Jackson's phenomenalism is also different from 'totalitarian versions' of the view: even though qualitative mental states (qualia) are causally inefficacious for the physical world, they can make a difference for other mental states.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- Three reasons are standardly given for holding that a quale like the hurtfulness of a pain must be causally efficacious in the physical world, and so, for instance, that its instantiation must sometimes make a difference to what happens in the brain. None, I will argue, has any real force […] (p. 133).

- Jackson announces he is going to talk about the typical reasons to deny epiphenomenalism about qualia and anticipates he is going to reject them.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- (i) It is supposed to be just obvious that the hurtfulness of pain is partly responsible for the subject seeking to avoid pain, saying 'It hurts' and so on. But, to reverse Hume, anything can fail to cause anything. No matter how often *B* follows *A*, and no matter how initially obvious the causality of the connection seems, the hypothesis that *A* causes *B* can be overturned by an over-arching theory which shows the two as distinct effects of a common underlying causal process (p. 133).

- Typically, the fact that pain hurts is taken to explain causally our behaviours meant to avoid pain in general.
- Against this view, Jackson puts forward notorious Humean concerns about causal relations: the regularity in the past of a causal transition between *As* and *Bs* does not suffice to conclude that such transitions are necessary.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- To the untutored the image on the screen of Lee Marvin's fist moving from left to right immediately followed by the image of John Wayne's head moving in the same general direction looks as causal as anything. And of course throughout countless Westerns images similar to the first are followed by images similar to the second. All this counts for precisely nothing when we know the over-arching theory concerning how the relevant images are both effects of an underlying causal process involving the projector and the film. The epiphenomenalist can say exactly the same about the connection between, for example, hurtfulness and behaviour. It is simply a consequence of the fact that certain happenings in the brain cause both (p. 133).

- Jackson exploits a metaphor from movies: like the causal relation between Marvin's fist and Wayne's head, which can be seen as a typical causal relation, we can switch the level and see it as an epiphenomenon of what is going on between the projector and the movie (the actual phenomenon).
- The same can happen for the hurtfulness of pain: it could be some hidden process in the brain that causes pains and behaviours intended to avoid pain.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- (ii) The second objection relates to Darwin's Theory of Evolution. According to natural selection the traits that evolve over time are those conducive to physical survival. We may assume that qualia evolved over time — we have them, the earliest forms of life do not — and so we should expect qualia to be conducive to survival. The objection is that they could hardly help us to survive if they do nothing to the physical world (pp. 133-34).

- The second argument comes from natural evolution: since we survived and have qualia, while the earliest organisms did not survive and lacked qualia, qualia make a difference to the physical world. Hence, epiphenomenalism about qualia is false.
- N.B. The objection assumes the existence of qualia ‘as qualia’: perceptual sensory states need not be thought of as qualia.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- The appeal of this argument is undeniable, but there is a good reply to it. Polar bears have particularly thick, warm coats. The Theory of Evolution explains this (we suppose) by pointing out that having a thick, warm coat is conducive to survival in the Arctic. But having a thick coat goes along with having a heavy coat, and having a heavy coat is not conducive to survival. It slows the animal down (p. 134).

- Jackson objects by attacking evolutionary arguments with the example of polar bears. Their warm coat is supposed to explain their survival in extremely cold environments. Jackson points out that warm coats are heavy and slow down bears: this is taken by Jackson as evidence of the fact that warm coats are not conducive to survival (follows discussion).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- Does this mean that we have refuted Darwin because we have found an evolved trait — having a heavy coat — which is not conducive to survival? Clearly not. Having a heavy coat is an unavoidable concomitant of having a warm coat (in the context, modern insulation was not available), and the advantages for survival of having a warm coat outweighed the disadvantages of having a heavy one. The point is that all we can extract from Darwin's theory is that we should expect any evolved characteristic to be *either* conducive to survival *or* a by-product of one that is so conducive. The epiphenomenalist holds that qualia fall into the latter category. They are a by-product of certain brain processes that are highly conducive to survival (p. 134).

- Jackson clarifies his argument: all that counts is that the evolutionary value of qualia can be assimilated to a byproduct of traits that are conducive to survival.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- (iii) The third objection is based on a point about how we come to know about other minds. We know about other minds by knowing about other behaviour, at least in part. The nature of the inference is a matter of some controversy, but it is not a matter of controversy that it proceeds from behaviour. That is why we think that stones do not feel and dogs do feel. But, runs the objection, how can a person's behaviour provide any reason for believing he has qualia like mine, or indeed any qualia at all, unless this behaviour can be regarded as the *outcome* of the qualia. Man Friday's footprint was evidence of Man Friday because footprints are causal outcomes of feet attached to people. And an epiphenomenalist cannot regard behaviour, or indeed anything physical, as an outcome of qualia (p. 134).

- The third argument against qualia epiphenomenalism is connected to the very idea of our knowledge of other minds. Roughly, (1) we infer them from behaviour (they are the invisible cause of behaviour); but (2) if we infer the existence of mental states only based on behaviour, then this must be true, as well, of qualia; and (3) if we infer qualia from behaviour, then (4) epiphenomenalism is false.
- Epiphenomenalists cannot claim causal influences on behaviour, so here there is a real problem for them.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- But consider my reading in *The Times* that Spurs won. This provides excellent evidence that *The Telegraph* has also reported that Spurs won, despite the fact that (I trust) *The Telegraph* does not get the results from *The Times*. They each send their own reporters to the game. *The Telegraph*'s report is in no sense an outcome of *The Times*', but the latter provides good evidence for the former nevertheless (p. 134).

- Jackson replies that we are in a situation like learning about the victory of Spurs in *The Times* or learning it by reading *The Telegraph* instead.
- The two reports are independent of each other, but nonetheless they are about the same event, and hence they can count as evidence for each other's content (follows discussion).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- The reasoning involved can be reconstructed thus. I read in *The Times* that Spurs won. This gives me reason to think that Spurs won because I know that Spurs' winning is the most likely candidate to be what caused the report in *The Times*. But I also know that Spurs' winning would have had many effects, including almost certainly a report in *The Telegraph* (p. 134).

- The main point of the example is a causal one: Spurs' victory is the most plausible cause of the report that we find in *The Times,* but this cause has many more effects, among which we can certainly expect a similar report in *The Telegraph*.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- I am arguing from one effect back to its cause and out again to another effect. The fact that neither effect causes the other is irrelevant. Now the epiphenomenalist allows that qualia are effects of what goes on in the brain. Qualia cause nothing physical but are caused by something physical. Hence the epiphenomenalist can argue from the behaviour of others to the qualia of others by arguing from the behaviour of others back to its causes in the brains of others and out again to their qualia (pp. 134-35).

- The causal structure of the example is as follows: an effect (*Times*' report) goes back to its cause (Spurs' victory) and then back to another effect (*Telegraph*'s report).
- The epiphenomenalist can argue on similar grounds: the behaviour of others can be evidence for qualia (of others) in one case; it can also be the effect of physical causes in the brain of others in another case; and then again, their qualia can be effects of such physical causes.
- Hence, the epiphenomenalist option is not incoherent.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- You may well feel for one reason or another that this is a more dubious chain of reasoning than its model in the case of newspaper reports. You are right. The problem of other minds is a major philosophical problem, the problem of other newspaper reports is not. But there is no special problem of Epiphenomenalism as opposed to, say, Interactionism here (p. 135).

- Jackson declares himself aware that the case of other minds is very different from that of newspaper reports.
- There is all the difficulty of the philosophical problem of other minds in the middle.
- The problem of other minds is given by the basic fact that we do not have access to the minds of others in a direct way and hence our knowledge of other minds is necessarily indirect (so such knowledge is limited and fallible). [We solve the problem, in practice, by implicitly adopting a ‘theory of mind’].

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- There is a very understandable response to the three replies I have just made. "All right, there is no knockdown refutation of the existence of epiphenomenal qualia. But the fact remains that they are an excrescence. They *do* nothing, they *explain* nothing, they serve merely to soothe the intuitions of dualists, and it is left a total mystery how they fit into the world view of science. In short we do not and cannot understand the how and why of them" (p. 135).

- Jackson anticipates the obvious reply of theorists who deny epiphenomenal qualia: qualia are not per se incoherent, but their paradigmatic uselessness in explanation makes them almost mysterious and indeed suspicious. They are a bit like 'the night in which all cows are black', and they are welcome just if one already has dualist intuitions (otherwise one can surely do without).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- This is perfectly true; but is no objection to qualia, for it rests on an overly optimistic view of the human animal, and its powers. We are the products of Evolution. We understand and sense what we need to understand and sense in order to survive. Epiphenomenal qualia are totally irrelevant to survival. At no stage of our evolution did natural selection favour those who could make sense of how they are caused and the laws governing them, or in fact why they exist at all. And that is why we can't (p. 135).

- The reply is good, Jackson admits, but that does not dismiss qualia altogether.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- It is not sufficiently appreciated that Physicalism is an extremely optimistic view of our powers. If it is true, we have, in very broad outline admittedly, a grasp of our place in the scheme of things. Certain matters of sheer complexity defeat us — there are an awful lot of neurons — but in principle we have it all (p. 135).

- This starts a reflection on the optimism implicit in physicalism. But there are limits, for example, like the complexity of neural mechanisms.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- But consider the antecedent probability that everything in the Universe be of a kind that is relevant in some way or other to the survival of *homo sapiens*. It is very low surely. But then one must admit that it is very likely that there is a part of the whole scheme of things, maybe a big part, which no amount of evolution will ever bring us near to knowledge about or understanding. For the simple reason that such knowledge and understanding is irrelevant to survival (p. 135).

- According to Jackson, in fact, the probabilities that everything in the universe is relevant for the evolution of *Homo Sapiens* are very low.
- And what we know about such things seems to be irrelevant for our survival; hence, there is much knowledge that is relevant and important despite being irrelevant for survival.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- Physicalists typically emphasise that we are a part of nature on their view, which is fair enough. But if we are a part of nature, we are as nature has left us after however many years of evolution it is, and each step in that evolutionary progression has been a matter of chance constrained just by the need to preserve or increase survival value. The wonder is that we understand as much as we do, and there is no wonder that there should be matters which fall quite outside our comprehension. Perhaps exactly how epiphenomenal qualia fit into the scheme of things is one such (p. 135).

- Here Jackson exploits a different strategy: perhaps, simply, we do not know enough of ourselves and our place in nature to see how 'putative' epiphenomenal qualia fit in the bigger picture.
- This is quite similar to naturalistic views, according to which what is not explained right now is not as unexplainable in principle.
- Such arguments, in general, are not taken to cut much wood.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- This may seem an unduly pessimistic view of our capacity to articulate a truly comprehensive picture of our world and our place in it. But suppose we discovered living on the bottom of the deepest oceans a sort of sea slug which manifested intelligence. Perhaps survival in the conditions required rational powers. Despite their intelligence, these sea slugs have only a very restricted conception of the world by comparison with ours, the explanation for this being the nature of their immediate environment. Nevertheless they have developed sciences which work surprisingly well in these restricted terms. They also have philosophers, called slugists. Some call themselves tough-minded slugists, others confess to being soft-minded slugists (pp. 135-36).

- Jackson provides an example along the lines sketched above. It is a science fictional example, with all the typical consequences.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- The tough-minded slugists hold that the restricted terms (or ones pretty like them which may be introduced as their sciences progress) suffice in principle to describe everything without remainder. These tough-minded slugists admit in moments of weakness to a feeling that their theory leaves something out. They resist this feeling and their opponents, the soft-minded slugists, by pointing out — absolutely correctly — that no slugist has ever succeeded in spelling out how this mysterious residue fits into the highly successful view that their sciences have and are developing of how their world works (p. 136).

- So, as the story goes, there is a divide among intelligent sea-slug philosophers: the tough-minded (reductionist) who want to explain everything without remainder and the soft-minded (anti-reductionist) who want to admit that there are holes in our explanations and that perhaps we cannot explain everything.
- The point is not new: the argument exploits intellectual humility to point out that our best efforts and achievements are perhaps not enough right now; this is not a problem per se. Sometimes a point like this is made by the enemies of science to disqualify scientific achievements, and hence such points must be handled with special care.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**

- IV. THE BOGEY OF EPIPHENOMENALISM
- Our sea slugs don't exist, but they might. And there might also exist super beings which stand to us as we stand to the sea slugs. We cannot adopt the perspective of these super beings, because we are not them, but the possibility of such a perspective is, I think, an antidote to excessive optimism (p. 136).

- Jackson concludes the article by acknowledging that this example is just a remote possibility (based again, like zombies, on conceiving possible worlds). Furthermore, he adds a final twist that tries to contrast scientific optimism on the one hand and suggest the possibilities of superbeings, which remind us of theological flavors. The suggestion is left barely on the ground, without comment.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Epiphenomenal Qualia**
- A brief summary
- Dualists usually exploit intuitions, but they need an argument that does not rest just on intuition;
- I) 1) Fred sees red_1 and red_2 where we just see red; we may know everything physical about Fred'svision and still do not know how it feels to discriminate between red_1 and red_2; physical descriptions leave something out; physicalism is incomplete; physicalism is false;
- I) 2) Mary is a brilliant scientist who is closed in a b/w room, in which she acquired all the physical/neural information about colour vision; but when she is freed for the first time, she learns something new (how does it feel to see red); thus, the previous knowledge was incomplete; hence, physicalism is false;
- II) differences between the modal argument (zombies) and the KA (Fred and Mary); the problems of the modal argument (conceivability is a controversial guide to metaphysical possibility);
- III) differences between the 'what it is like' argument and the KA;
- IV) problems with epiphenomenalism about the mental; epiphenomenalism must be restricted to qualia (first assumption); epiphenomenal qualia may influence other mental states even though they do not influence physical entities/processes (second assumption); three objections against epiphenomenalism:
- IV-1 the first is the causal connection between pains and behaviours (as when the finger is in the fire)– if pains cause behaviour then epiphenomenalism about qualia is false;
- IV-2 natural evolution explains mental features as conducive to survival—epiphenomenalism about qualia prevents qualia from playing such a role—if qualia play such a role, then epiphenomenalism is false;
- IV-3 behaviour is the only evidence for the mental states of others—but if qualia are epiphenomenal, then they cannot cause behaviour—if they cannot cause behaviour (which is the only evidence for them), then we cannot have evidence of qualia—but we have evidence of qualitative states and experiences—and hence epiphenomenalism is false;
- Jackson tries to show these are not knockdown objections; furthermore, Jackson shapes a framework in which physicalism is a too optimistic view of science and progress, and claims that epiphenomenal qualia (and dualism) may fit in the big scheme of things in the long run.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **The ability hypothesis**

- If we distinguish, with Gilbert Ryle, between '**knowing that**' (propositional knowledge like 'knowing that the cat is on the mat') and '**knowing how**' (practical abilities like 'knowing how to ride a bicycle') we can reply to the KA in a different way:

- According to David K. Lewis and others, when Mary is set free, **she learns a practical ability**: how to recognize red things; so, physicalism is not incomplete/false.
- Mary has all the propositional (physical) knowledge about vision and then she learns how to recognize red stuff (i.e., a practical ability). Puzzled solved. Or not?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- MARY is confined to a black-and-white room, is educated through black-and-white books and through lectures relayed on black-and-white television. In this way she learns everything there is to know about the physical nature of the world. She knows all the physical facts about us and our environment, in a wide sense of 'physical' which includes everything in *completed* physics, chemistry, and neurophysiology, and all there is to know about the causal and relational facts consequent upon all this, including of course functional roles. If physicalism is true, she knows all there is to know. For to suppose otherwise is to suppose that there is more to know than every physical fact, and that is just what physicalism denies (p. 291).

- Jackson provides a new synthetic presentation of Mary's thought experiment. The description of the knowledge Mary possesses is here more detailed.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- Physicalism is not the noncontroversial thesis that the actual world is largely physical, but the challenging thesis that it is entirely physical. This is why physicalists must hold that complete physical knowledge is complete knowledge simpliciter. For suppose it is not complete: then our world must differ from a world, *W(P)*, for which it is complete, and the difference must be in nonphysical facts; for our world and *W(P)* agree in all matters physical. Hence, physicalism would be false at our world [though contingently so, for it would be true at *W(P)*] (p. 291).

- Jackson soon switches to physicalism. It is here defined as the view that **the world is completely physical**. Starting from that definition, Jackson introduces the hypothesis that our world is not completely physical and that there is another possible world that is physically identical to ours but complete. The difference between the two worlds, according to Jackson, i.e., ours' incompleteness, must consist of non-physical facts.
- **Question**: What are non-physical facts?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- It seems, however, that Mary does not know all there is to know. For when she is let out of the black-and-white room or given a color television, she will learn what it is like to see something red, say. This is rightly described as *learning* - she will not say "ho, hum." Hence, physicalism is false. This is the knowledge argument against physicalism in one of its manifestations. This note is a reply to three objections to it mounted by Paul M. Churchland (p. 291).

- Jackson's presentation goes on with Mary going out of her room and learning new things; hence, the physical knowledge she had is incomplete and physicalism is false.
- Jackson declares that he is going to reply to three objections presented by Paul Churchland (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- I. THREE CLARIFICATIONS
- The knowledge argument does not rest on the dubious claim that logically you cannot imagine what sensing red is like unless you have sensed red. Powers of imagination are not to the point. The contention about Mary is not that, despite her fantastic grasp of neurophysiology and everything else physical, she *could not imagine* what it is like to sense red; it is that, as a matter of fact, she *would not know*. But if physicalism is true, she would know; and no great powers of imagination would be called for. Imagination is a faculty that those who *lack* knowledge need to fall back on (p. 292).

- The first point is about imagination; the knowledge argument is not about the powers of imagination at Mary's disposal **before** she leaves the room.
- The point is that if physicalism were true she should know how is to see red; she does not know (**before** leaving the room); hence, physicalism is false.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- I. THREE CLARIFICATIONS
- Secondly, the intensionality of knowledge is not to the point. The argument does not rest on assuming falsely that, if *S* knows that *a* is *F* and if *a* = *b*, then *S* knows that *b* is *F*. It is concerned with the nature of Mary's total body of knowledge before she is released: is it complete, or do some facts escape it? What is to the point is that *S* may know that *a* is *F* and know that *a* = *b*, yet arguably not know that *b* is *F*, by virtue of not being sufficiently logically alert to follow the consequences through. If Mary's lack of knowledge were at all like this, there would be no threat to physicalism in it. But it is very hard to believe that her lack of knowledge could be remedied merely by her explicitly following through enough logical consequences of her vast physical knowledge. Endowing her with great logical acumen and persistence is not in itself enough to fill in the gaps in her knowledge. On being let out, she will not say "I could have worked all this out before by making some more purely logical inferences" (p. 292).

- Jackson also rejects the view that Mary does not know how is to see red because of the 'intensionality' (with 's') of knowledge. This point is important because we will be facing significant variants later.
- This point requires a bit of talk concerning 'intensionality'. What is it? (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **INTENSIONALITY**
- Intensional notions are those concepts that are ‘not extensionally transparent’; extensional idioms are those in which the referential dimension can be made fully explicit, e.g., the extension of ‘red’ is the collection of red things. Consider the following sentences A and B:

A. George believes that Tully is a spy;

B. George believes that Cicero is a spy;

- If George does not know that Cicero = Tully, we are not allowed to substitute Tully for Cicero in (A) or Cicero for Tully in (B).
- Such substitutions are, in fact, **opaque** (Quine).

- Such substitutions fail in all propositional attitudes (believing, knowing, hoping, etc.), in which the object is a proposition (the object of an attitude).
- These are called **intensional contexts**: in such contexts, substitutions of co-referring expressions fail (Other intensional contexts regard modalities). **Extensional contexts** permit substitutions between co-referring expressions; **Intensional contexts** do not permit such substitutions between co-referring expressions.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- I. THREE CLARIFICATIONS
- Thirdly, the knowledge Mary lacked which is of particular point for the knowledge argument against physicalism is *knowledge about the experiences of others*, not about her own. When she is let out, she has new experiences, color experiences she has never had before. It is not, therefore, an objection to physicalism that she learns *something* on being let out. Before she was let out, she could not have known facts about her experience of red, for there were no such facts to know. That physicalist and nonphysicalist alike can agree on. After she is let out, things change; and physicalism can happily admit that she learns this; after all, some physical things will change, for instance, her brain states and their functional roles (p. 292).

- Jackson clarifies what it is that Mary learns out of the room: knowledge about the experience of others (that is, how others see red). Physicalism cannot tell you how others feel when they see red.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- I. THREE CLARIFICATIONS
- The trouble for physicalism is that, after Mary sees her first ripe tomato, she will realize how impoverished her conception of the mental life of *others* has been *all along*. She will realize that there was, all the time she was carrying out her laborious investigations into the neurophysiologies of others and into the functional roles of their internal states, something about these people she was quite unaware of. All along their experiences (or many of them, those got from tomatoes, the sky, . . .) had a feature conspicuous to them but until now hidden from her (in fact, not in logic). But she knew all the physical facts about them all along; hence, what she did not know until her release is not a physical fact about their experiences. But it is a fact about them. That is the trouble for physicalism (pp. 292-93).

- Mary realizes how her neurophysiological study of vision inside the black and white room lacked something, notwithstanding that her knowledge was 'complete'. This is supposed to be, according to Jackson, the real trouble with functionalism; she knew all the physical facts about the experiences of others, but she lacked (other) facts (i.e., nonphysical) about the experiences of others.
- **Question**: Is it possible to know everything there is to know about seeing red without seeing red? Does it make sense to say that Mary has neurophysiological knowledge of the vision of red before ever seeing it? (These are important questions because philosophers usually admit this aspect; nonetheless, it can be questioned.)

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Paul M. Churchland**

- Churchland is a canadian philosopher, has been Wilfrid Sellars' student, and he is famous for his theory known as **eliminative materialism**: folk psychological and common sensical notions like 'beliefs', 'desires', 'sensations' and so on, (falsely) stand to what happens inside the brain (at the neural level), as phlogiston (falsely) stood for combustion; folk psychological notions are raw materials drawn from the 'manifest image of mankind in the world' (Sellars), that is, from common sense experiences;

- Neuroscience (the scientific image of mankind in the world) is bound to exorcise the mind as a mythological entity, going beyond the putative and superficial (false) wisdom drawn from the manifest image; the scientific study of the brain will replace, in the future, our naïve views concerning a putative mind. This tendency has been called **neurophilosophy**, as the title of a book by his wife, Patricia Churchland. Neuroscience will put increasing constraints on our philosophical accounts of mental phenomena.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- (i) Churchland's first objection is that the knowledge argument contains a defect that "is simplicity itself" […]. The argument equivocates on the sense of 'knows about'. How so? Churchland suggests that the following is "a conveniently tightened version" of the knowledge argument:
- (1) Mary knows everything there is to know about brain states and their properties.
- (2) It is not the case that Mary knows everything there is to know about sensations and their properties.
- Therefore, by Leibniz's law,
- (3) Sensations and their properties ≠ brain states and their properties […] (p. 293).

- We can see here the bulk of Churchland's objection to the knowledge argument: it equivocates on two senses of 'knowing'. Churchland exploited a modified version of the argument (1-3) to make this point.
- (This objection contains an anticipation of the 'ability' point that will be made by David Lewis: according to this, Mary learns a new ability of recognizing red things.)

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- Leibniz's law

- **The Identity of Indiscernibles**:

- "no two objects have exactly the same properties";
- Hence, if two objects have the same exact properties, then they are identical;
- If similar objects differ, even in the slightest respect, then they are different objects.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- Churchland observes, plausibly enough, that the type or kind of knowledge involved in premise 1 is distinct from the kind of knowledge involved in premise 2. We might follow his lead and tag the first 'knowledge by description', and the second 'knowledge by acquaintance'; but, whatever the tags, he is right that the displayed argument involves a highly dubious use of Leibniz's law (p. 293).

- Jackson admits that Churchland's point about the equivocation is plausible. Churchland's version of the argument indeed poses a threat to the safe use of Leibniz's law (no two objects have exactly the same properties; hence, if they can be substituted with each other, they are identical).
- Here the substitution fails because, according to Churchland, knowledge (in premise 1) ≠ knowledge (in premise 2).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- My reply is that the displayed argument may be convenient, but it is not accurate. It is not the knowledge argument. Take, for instance, premise 1. The whole thrust of the knowledge argument is that Mary (before her release) does *not* know everything there is to know about brain states and their properties, because she does not know about certain qualia associated with them. What is complete, according to the argument, is her knowledge of matters physical (p. 293).

- Jackson starts discussing the objection. The first point is that Churchland's reconstruction is **not accurate**: argument (1-3) is **not the KA**.
- Jackson better clarifies his point: Mary knows everything physical about vision **but lacks certain qualia** associated with neural states and properties.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- A convenient and accurate way of displaying the argument is:

- (1)' Mary (before her release) knows everything physical there is to know about other people.
- (2)' Mary (before her release) does not know everything there is to know about other people (because she learns something about them on her release).
- Therefore,
- (3)' There are truths about other people (and herself) which escape the physicalist story (p. 293).

- This is an important point: Jackson provides **his own explication of the argument**. The knowledge argument (1'-3') is quite different from Churchland's (1-3) suggested reconstruction.
- Let us see how Jackson comments on this new version.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- What is immediately to the point is not the kind, manner, or type of knowledge Mary has, but *what* she knows. What she knows beforehand is ex hypothesi everything physical there is to know, but is it everything there is to know? That is the crucial question (pp. 293-94).

- Jackson's first comment is an attempt to reject the equivocation between types of knowledge: the point is, in fact, according to Jackson, ***what* is known before and after** Mary's release.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- There is, though, a relevant challenge involving questions about kinds of knowledge. It concerns the *support* for premise 2'. The case for premise 2' is that Mary learns something on her release, she acquires knowledge, and that entails that her knowledge beforehand (*what* she knew, never mind whether by description, acquaintance, or whatever) was incomplete. The challenge, mounted by David Lewis and Laurence Nemirow, is that on her release Mary does *not* learn something or acquire knowledge in the relevant sense (p. 294).

- Even though the topic deals with what is known and not with types of knowledge, something more must be said about the latter.
- This is, in fact, the 'ability objection' raised by Lewis and Nemirow (what Mary learns is not knowledge but a new ability) that we already introduced.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- What Mary acquires when she is released is a certain representational or imaginative ability; it is knowledge how rather than knowledge that. Hence, a physicalist can admit that Mary acquires something very significant of a knowledge kind-which can hardly be denied without admitting that this shows that her earlier factual knowledge is defective. She knew all *that* there was to know about the experiences of others beforehand, but lacked an ability until after her release (p. 294).

- This is the ability objection made explicit. One thing is knowledge that (complete knowledge of the physiology of vision), quite another is knowledge how (knowing how to recognize red things).
- Let us see how Jackson replies to it.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- Now it is certainly true that Mary will acquire abilities of various kinds after her release. She will, for instance, be able to imagine what seeing red is like, be able to remember what it is like, and be able to understand why her friends regarded her as so deprived (something which, until her release, had always mystified her). But is it plausible that that is *all* she will acquire? (p. 294).

- Jackson admits that, in general, Mary's acquisition of new abilities is certainly true.
- Jackson, however, contests that new abilities are all that Mary acquires.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- Suppose she received a lecture on skepticism about other minds while she was incarcerated. On her release she sees a ripe tomato in normal conditions, and so has a sensation of red. Her first reaction is to say that she now knows more about the kind of experiences others have when looking at ripe tomatoes. She then remembers the lecture and starts to worry. Does she really know more about what their experiences are like, or is she indulging in a wild generalization from one case? (p. 294).

- Jackson adds a variant to the example: skepticism. Being aware of skeptical possibilities, she may wonder about simplistic generalizations.
- Let us see how Jackson develops this discussion.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- In the end she decides she does know, and that skepticism is mistaken (even if, like so many of us, she is not sure how to demonstrate its errors). What was she to-ing and fro-ing [moving back and forth] about-her abilities? Surely not; her representational abilities were a known constant throughout. What else then was she agonizing about than whether or not she had gained factual knowledge of others? There would be nothing to agonize about if ability was all she acquired on her release (p. 294).

- The point about the skeptical possibilities, according to Jackson, is not about abilities but about *knowing something* new – the legitimate object of skeptical questions and doubts.
- N.B. There are philosophers who question the legitimacy of skeptical doubts (like Ludwig Wittgenstein, Richard Rorty, and Michael Williams, among others).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- I grant that I have no *proof* that Mary acquires on her release, as well as abilities, factual knowledge about the experiences of others -and not just because I have no disproof of skepticism. My claim is that the knowledge argument is a valid argument from highly plausible, though admittedly not demonstrable, premises to the conclusion that physicalism is false. And that, after all, is about as good an objection as one could expect in this area of philosophy (p. 295).

- Jackson ends the discussion of the first objection by admitting that the argument relies mainly on intuition and certainly not on proof.
- But, as it stands, it is a plausible objection to the ambitions of physicalism.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- (ii) Churchland's second objection […] is that there must be something wrong with the argument, for it proves too much. Suppose Mary received a special series of lectures over her black-and-white television from a full-blown dualist, explaining the "laws" governing the behavior of "ectoplasm" and telling her about qualia. This would not affect the plausibility of the claim that on her release she learns something. So if the argument works against physicalism, it works against dualism too (p. 295).

- Churchland's second objection deals with the strength of the argument: it proves so much that one can imagine Mary being lectured (via TV) about dualism and qualia in her room and then learning something as well on release.
- This would mean that the very same point can be made against dualism.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- My reply is that lectures about qualia over black-and-white television do not tell Mary all there is to know about qualia. They may tell her some things about qualia, for instance, that they do not appear in the physicalist's story, and that the quale we use 'yellow' for is nearly as different from the one we use 'blue' for as is white from black. But why should it be supposed that they tell her everything about qualia? (p. 295).

- Jackson rejects the objection because lecturing via TV about qualia and experiencing them is not the same thing. Why should such lectures, asks Jackson, contain all there is to qualia?
- N.B. There is an **asymmetry** in this reply in rejecting the idea that knowledge of qualia in the room is incomplete while knowledge about the neurology of vision in the room is complete.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- On the other hand, it is plausible that lectures over black-and-white television might in principle tell Mary everything in the physicalist's story. You do not need color television to learn physics or functionalist psychology. To obtain a good argument against dualism (attribute dualism; ectoplasm is a bit of fun), the premise in the knowledge argument that Mary has the full story according to physicalism before her release, has to be replaced by a premise that she has the full story according to dualism. The former is plausible; the latter is not. Hence, there is no "parity of reasons" trouble for dualists who use the knowledge argument (p. 295).

- Jackson rejects the objection by saying that the completeness of dualist knowledge is implausible, while the completeness of physicalist stories is plausible.
- N.B. Jackson's argument (and especially his defense of premise 1) here is not so convincing: can we talk about the neural functions activated by certain experiences without having a minimal grasp of such experiences? I am skeptical that we can. Hence, even though Jackson is confident that attributing physicalist knowledge to Mary is plausible, one may object that this view takes for granted that knowing the neurophysiology of certain visual experiences can be obtained *with no acquaintance at all* with such experiences.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- (iii) Churchland's third objection is that the knowledge argument claims "that Mary could not even *imagine* what the relevant experience would be like, despite her exhaustive neuroscientific knowledge, and hence must still be missing certain crucial information“ […], a claim he goes on to argue against (p. 295).

- This is Churchland’s third objection. It is implausible to say that Mary has complete physiological knowledge of vision while denying that she could even imagine what the experience would be.
- Could such knowledge of vision be complete without the ability to imagine, even roughly, what visual experiences would be like?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **What Mary Didn't Know**

- II. CHURCHLAND'S THREE OBJECTIONS
- But, as we emphasized earlier, the knowledge argument claims that Mary would not know what the relevant experience is like. What she could imagine is another matter. If her knowledge is defective, despite being all there is to know according to physicalism, then physicalism is false, whatever her powers of imagination (p. 295).

- Jackson replies by distinguishing sharply between knowledge and imagination. One thing is knowing what the experience is like, and quite another is being able to imagine what the experience is like.
- This reply assumes that knowing is entirely *detachable and distinguishable* from imagining. *Could we know everything we know if we were totally deprived of imaginative capacities*? *Do learning processes avoid exploiting imagination*? These are clearly hard-to-answer questions. (But the fact that they are sound questions signals that Jackson's reply is clearly not the last word.)

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Summary of the discussion**

- **What Mary didn't know**
- 1 – Summary of the KA (with a new definition of physicalism);
- 2 – Three clarifications
- 2.1 The KA does not concern imaginative capacities (but just knowledge);
- 2.2 The KA does not involve issues concerning the intensionality of knowledge attributions;
- 2.3 The KA is about the experiences of other people (not just Mary's);
- 3 – Three replies to Churchland's objections
- 3.1 Churchland formalizes the KA by exploiting a controversial version of premise 1 (Mary knows everything about brain states and properties) – and the KA with this premise just shows that knowing about sensations is different from knowing about brain states; Jackson replies that this version of premise 1 begs the question against the point of the KA, because the original KA states that she lacks knowledge about certain qualia (before release); Jackson raises the abilities objection here, and provides a tentative reply based on skepticism;
- 3.2 Churchland affirms that the KA proves too much; we can imagine Mary knowing everything about qualia and then learning something new as well on release; Jackson replies that knowing everything about qualia in the b/w room is not a plausible version of premise 1;
- 3.3 Churchland affirms that the KA requires that Mary could not even imagine what it is like to have colour experiences inside the room; Jackson replies, once more, that issues about imagination are not to the point as just knowledge matters.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- Brian Loar
- **Phenomenal States**

- A phenomenal quality, let us say, is a feature of a conscious state that is notable introspectively, ostensively, as *that* aspect of the state, that way it feels, appears, etc. Phenomenal qualities vary in generality: I can note that a state of mine has what all smells share, or that it is the smell of new mown grass. They can be complex and of wide scope, like a feeling of being in a sailboat on a windy day, or an everyday comprehensive feeling of being awake. No direct semantic correlation holds between phenomenal qualities and English expressions: it is all to easy to notice nameless phenomenal features, the most direct way of thinking about which is demonstrative-"that sort of feeling.“ (p. 81)

- Loar begins his article by introducing phenomenal qualities, which deal with how we feel during our experiences of whatever sort. Phenomenal qualities can be complex, that is, made of many components (like the feeling of being in a boat on a windy day). These states are not systematically correlated with words: we must sometimes invent expressions to express how we feel (or to exploit metaphors).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Now some say that phenomenal qualities cannot be physical or functional in nature, often with deep conviction, as the obvious and natural view, as if the opposite-physicalism-were strained and entertainable only by ideologues. I am surprised at this conviction, for such anti-physicalism seems to me always to rest on some technical and far from evident philosophical assumption. Perhaps the most influential current anti-physicalist line of thought is this (p. 81).

- Loar introduces anti-physicalism. It rests on a 'technical and far from evident […] assumption'; hence, it is not immediately intuitive. Loar goes on providing its most famous formulation (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- It is observed that a physical or functional description of another organism could never suffice for *knowing* what experiences it has, what it is like to have them; and it is concluded that experiential or phenomenal facts or qualities cannot be (merely) physical-functional facts or properties. The inference is implicit in less philosophically self-conscious thinking: a brain scientist may despair of identifying consciousness or raw feels with neural states because neural facts, however exhaustive, never *tell* him which if any experiences are occurring (pp. 81-82).

- All the physical descriptions of what goes on in the human brain during these experiences do not tell us what it is like to have them. Functional(ist) characterizations are not enough. Hence, the story goes, phenomenal qualities cannot be functional properties. Furthermore, such an argument relies on an implicit assumption: neuroscientists are not capable of identifying neural states with conscious states.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- The reasoning of course is not explicitly formally valid, and the implicit premise needs uncovering. Consider the familiar Cartesian argument whose explicit premise is more or less the converse of the foregoing: from the observation that one can conceive of having any given phenomenal quality without having any specific or detailed physical-functional property the conclusion again is drawn that phenomenal qualities are not physical-functional properties. The two arguments seem to presuppose this: the cognitive independence, one way or the other, of *conceptions* couched in phenomenal and in physical-functional terms implies the distinctness of phenomenal and physical-functional facts or *properties* (p. 82).

- Loar reads the anti-physicalist argument as relying on the following idea: since the phenomenal aspects of conscious experiences are *accessed independently* of functional/physical characterizations, then these are not functional/physical properties.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Some may think anti-physicalism requires no such premise because it requires no philosophical argument; it is simply revealed in introspecting an experience that it is not (entirely) physical-functional in nature: you observe what the phenomenal quality is, with its nature laid out before the mind, and note that it is not a physical-functional property. But the only evident facts here are that introspection delivers up no physical-functional description, and also perhaps that, even if science supplies a candidate description, you cannot tell just from introspection whether it applies. And to infer from these facts the distinctness of phenomenal and physical-functional properties requires some version of the above implicit premise (p. 82).

- Some anti-physicalists may be tempted to think they do not need any argument and that the non-physical nature of experiences becomes evident through introspection. But this, on close inspection, does not suffice: the implicit premise is necessary; otherwise, a tempting conclusion may be that introspection is not a reliable source of knowledge (i.e. the argument can backfire).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Another line of anti-physicalist thought can be assimilated to this model. Phenomenal qualities appear explanatorily irreducible: no amount of physical theory and description can tell you *why* a twinge feels like *that*. Now this again involves the implicit premise; for what would count as explanation? Presumably only something *a priori*: you would have to *just understand* that a state with certain physical-functional properties is a twinge (p. 82).

- Another argument stresses the irreducibility of phenomenal qualities. They cannot be reduced/explained in physical terms. So another kind of explanation is required: which one? Perhaps, if physical, a posteriori, explanations are not feasible, we should require something different. Example: an a priori explanation. Is this available?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- So these anti-physicalist lines of thought have two premises. One is conservative and strictly epistemic, about our conceptions; the other allows deriving a substantive conclusion from the epistemic premise (p. 82).

- So the premises of anti-physicalist arguments typically rely on how qualities are given to us (and the independence of this from any functional/physicalist description) and on the fact that the 'what is it like' aspect of experiences cannot be reduced to physicalist or functionalist terms—such descriptions/explanations do not tell how the experience is;
- First typical premise: **cognitive independence** of the conception of qualities based on introspection and the conception of them based on physicalist descriptions;
- Second typical premise: **irreducibility** of sensed qualities (the 'feel') to physical descriptions/explanations (these are not telling at all about the feel).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- The first seems to flow from common sense: a conception of a state in physical-functional terms can imply a conception of it in phenomenal terms—of what it is like to have that state—only *a posteriori.* Knowing that *p*, if *p* is conceived in physical-functional terms, never *a priori* suffices for knowing that *q,* if *q* is conceived in phenomenal terms (and vice versa for a detailed physical or psychofunctional *p*.) This has been denied, but it seems to me correct; it is the fundamental anti-physicalist intuition and I accept it (pp. 82-83).

- More in detail, the first premise starts from common sense—conceptions of mental states in physical (or functional) terms can be conceived as identical with phenomenal states only a posteriori, given some empirical observation, discovery, or research. Hence, they are not identified as such a priori (the conceptual connection is not automatic). Functionalist philosophers deny this, but Loar accepts it as an intuition.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Suppose you try to avoid the need for a further premise, and condense the argument: "knowing the physical functional facts cannot suffice for knowing the phenomenal facts; therefore the latter aren't merely physical-functional." But accepting the anti-naturalist intuition does not commit one to this condensed premise on the strong transparent reading the anti-physicalist requires. Any physicalist must deny it on that reading; he must say that to know the physical-functional facts is to know facts that are the phenomenal facts (p. 83).

- To say just that functional facts are insufficient to access/know phenomenal facts goes beyond the legitimacy of the **anti-naturalist intuition** "Knowing that p, if p is conceived in physical-functional terms, never a priori suffices for knowing that q, if q is conceived in phenomenal terms";
- Physicalist philosophers should deny that condensed reading and therefore insist that in terms of knowledge, in principle, we **have no reason to deny** that knowledge of phen-states is not knowledge of phys-states.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Accepting the basic anti-physicalist intuition requires accepting the premise only on a conservative or opaque reading: knowledge conceived in physical-functional terms cannot suffice *a priori* for knowledge conceived in phenomenal terms. And for that to imply that phenomenal qualities are something over and above physical-functional properties, the further premise is needed (p. 83).

- The most anti-physicalist philosophers can do is to put it in terms of a priori insufficiency for knowledge (knowledge conceived in physical-functional terms cannot suffice *a priori* for knowledge conceived in phenomenal terms). Hence, this premise for a priori knowledge (the cognitive independence of knowledge *phen* from knowledge *phys*) is insufficient to deny the identity between phenomenal and functional states (see below).
- We could accept this cognitive independence concerning the very same facts, according to Loar. How?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Call it *the semantic minor premise*: two predicates or concepts that are connected only *a posteriori* introduce distinct properties; if it is *a posteriori* that *F* occurs when *G* occurs, then the predicates or concepts *F* and *G* introduce distinct properties of whatever they apply to (p. 83).

- When it is not possible to establish a priori an identity between states, then such conceptual connections between such states count as legitimate only a posteriori. This is the starting point for Loars' synthesized version of the **semantic minor premise** (implicit in the anti-physicalist argument): 'if it is a posteriori that *F* occurs when *G* occurs, then the predicates or concepts *F* and *G* introduce distinct properties of whatever they apply to'.
- To be identical *in a noncontroversial way*, *F* and *G* should be connected a priori; since they can be connected only a posteriori, then they introduce different properties (or so the anti-physicalist is willing to admit).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Anti-physicalist implicit premises (according to Loar's analysis)**

- **Epistemic premise** (**EP**): Knowing that *p*, if *p* is conceived in physical-functional terms, never a priori suffices for knowing that *q*, if *q* is conceived in phenomenal terms (and vice versa for a detailed physical or psychofunctional *p*); this is also called the **cognitive independence** of phys-conceptions from phen-conceptions;

- **Semantic minor premise** (**SMP**): Two predicates or concepts that are connected only a posteriori introduce distinct properties; if it is a posteriori that *F* occurs when *G* occurs, then the predicates or concepts *F* and *G* introduce distinct properties of whatever they apply to (p. 83); this premise is useful to affirm that true identities should be **revealed as such a priori**, otherwise there is no identity.

- **From cognitive independence to metaphysically distinct properties**: Since there is no a priori connection between phys-conceptions and phen-conceptions (EP), this **must be** a posteriori; if this is so, then the properties introduced are **different** (SMP).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- I use the non-standard 'introduce' to avoid ascribing a simplistic position to the anti-naturalist. Had I said 'designate', the semantic minor premise would rule out those *a posteriori* property identities that have served as the paradigm of scientific reduction, e.g. of heat and a statistical-mechanical property (p. 83).

- Loar specifies how using ‘introducing’ rather than ‘designating’ in the above premise is useful to avoid disqualifying the anti-naturalist position as simplistic: after all, **the interesting identities and reductions that we discovered in nature were all a posteriori** (so this should alone be a counterexample against the anti-naturalist premise);
- Talking of ‘introduction’ instead of mere ‘designation’ here can **save the anti-physicalist from this easy reply**;

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- It has been held that (although all identities are necessary) *a posteriori* judgments of property identity are possible when at least one term refers via a contingent reference-fixing condition: 'heat' connotes the higher order property *being the cause of heat sensations*, which is distinct from the statistical mechanical property and therefore distinct from heat itself; 'heat' connotes the one and thereby designates the other (p. 83).

- To establish a posteriori identities one just needs at least that one term, for example, ‘heat’, *connotes* a higher-order general causal property, like picking out its causal process. The easy cases are just *designation* cases, like water=H_2O. *Connotation* is what Frege called ‘sense’ as opposed to ‘reference’ (denotation). Connotation (sense) is the mode of presentation of a referent—in this case ‘being the cause of heat sensations’ is the mode of presentation of ‘heat’. So the relation between a referent and its modes of presentation can be sufficient, in the right cases, to establish a posteriori identities (by fixing reference);
- Senses or modes of presentations, can help us in certain cases to **fix the referent** of a certain expression: e.g., the evening star (***that*** planet that is the first to shine bright at dusk).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- So in the semantic minor premise, let 'introduce' mean "directly designate, or connote as a higher order reference-fixer." Then the semantic minor premise does not exclude *a posteriori* property identities, but it does require in that case a distinct higher order property in the background, doing semantic work (pp. 83-84).

- "Introduce" here is interpreted as a **disjunctive predicate**: "directly **designate**, or **connote as** a higher order reference-fixer." ;
- This disjunctive reading of the SMP **even though compatible** with (EP) –i.e., cognitive independence of phenomenal conceptions from physical conceptions – **does not rule out the possibility of a posteriori identities** fixed by direct designation (so it does not follow that they must be different);
- Experiences and scientific research are examples of ways in which we can, perhaps a posteriori, establish the identity between certain properties (like, for example, physical and phenomenal ones), and this is not any more ruled out by the anti-naturalist premise.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Suppose a physicalist appealed to that paradigm of property identities in explaining the *a posteriori* status of "phenomenal property *F* = physical-functional property *G*", where *G* is a fully spelled out expression of some theory (p. 84).

- Loar introduces a new supposition: a physicalist appeals to the identity between phys-prop *F* and phen-prop *G* as one like 'water=H_2O, characterizing *G* in terms of a particular scientific theory/explanation concerning phenomenal states (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- The anti-naturalist should reply that this identity could be true only if the phenomenal term introduces a reference fixing property-perhaps the property *being the (underlying) property that feels like such and such*, and that this higher order property cannot itself be physical-functional. Given my acceptance of the epistemic premise I shall concede this; if the semantic minor premise is true then physicalism is false (or there are no such properties as phenomenal qualities.) (p. 84).

- Given the supposition above, the anti-naturalist should proceed by saying that an a posteriori identity between phen-prop *G* and phys-prop *F* is true only if the phenomenal term for *G* is a higher-order reference fixing property (a mode of presentation)—that cannot itself be a physical or functional property;
- Given this, the SMP is the basis, if true, together with EP (i.e., cognitive independence) to infer **the falsehood of physicalism** (or also the denial of phenomenal qualities **as distinct entities** in the world) – inf fact, if 'introducing' in SMP is disjunctive, there is the alternative possibility of **direct designation**; this **would admit** a posteriori identities;
- The floor is now ready for the 'phenomenal concepts strategy'.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- It is easy to say under what abstract conditions phenomenal conceptions may be cognitively independent of physical-functional conceptions while the properties the former introduce are fully physical-functional properties. This captures it schematically: (a) physical-functional conceptions of brain states refer in whatever way terms in physical theories refer, while (b) phenomenal concepts have a conceptual role distinct from that of "theoretical" terms such that concepts with that role refer *directly*, without higher order reference fixing; with the result that (c) terms of the two kinds may converge in the properties they introduce despite the independence of their cognitive roles, that is, even though knowledge couched in physical-functional terms never puts one in a position to apply specific phenomenal concepts or vice versa. The property to which a phenomenal concept somehow directly refers may just be a property captured by a term of a physical-functional theory (p. 84).

- There are 3 steps to show how phenomenal conceptions can be cognitively independent of physical-functional conceptions while the phenomenal properties are de facto physical-functional properties (that is, cognitive independence is not sufficient to establish a metaphysical difference);
- A) physical-functional conceptions of brain states directly refer as in physical theories; B) phenomenal concepts, that play a different conceptual role than functional-physical ones, directly refer as well—and so without reference fixing higher-order modes of presentation; C) physical-functional conceptions and phenomenal concepts **may converge in the properties they introduce**, even though they are **cognitively independent;**
- This is the first introduction to the term '**phenomenal concepts**' (more on this below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Summary: Where we are right now**

- **Jackson's knowledge argument:**
- (metaphysical upshot) Physical properties ≠ Phenomenal properties (dualism is true)
- (Mary's case explained) Mary knows everything physical, but on release she learns something new about the qualia characteristic of the experiences of other people, showing that physicalism is incomplete;

- **Lewis's ability hypothesis:**
- (metaphysical upshot) Physical properties = Phenomenal properties (physicalism is true)
- (Mary's case explained) Mary 'knows[-that]' all physical descriptions about colour vision, but on release she learns new abilities: *how to* recognize certain qualities and so forth, hence physicalism is not incomplete (knowledge-that ≠ knowledge-how);

- **Loar's phenomenal concepts:**
- (metaphysical upshot) Physical properties = Phenomenal properties (physicalism is true)
- (Mary's case explained) Mary knows everything according to a physical description/conception of reality, but on release she learns how to use phenomenal concepts in their proper context of acquisition and use and to conceive things according to a phenomenal conception/description; hence, physicalism is not incomplete (but the physical conception is cognitively independent from the phenomenal conception and vice versa).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Before we turn to the details, it might help to have a look at two other accounts, one anti- and the other pro-physicalist. Kripke's argument in "Naming and Necessity" ostensibly differs from the anti-physicalist argument so far. The Cartesian intuition that pain could occur without any given physical state has, he says, to be explained away by physicalists (p. 84).

- Before going to analyze the scheme, let us introduce Kripke's anti-physicalist argument (from *Naming and Necessity*): pain can occur even without conceiving it as realized in physical states, and this aspect must be explained away by physicalists (to make physicalism plausible/feasible);
- Kripke's argument against materialism: The only way to defend the identity between physical and mental states, according to Kripke, is **as an a posteriori necessary identity,** but such an identity—for example, pain is C-fiber firing—could not be necessary, **given the open possibility** of a pain that has nothing to do with C-fiber firing.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- The appearance of the contingency of the identity of, say, heat and a statistical-mechanical property, Kripke thinks, is explained thus: a person "could be, *qualitatively* speaking, in the same epistemic situation" as a person in the presence of heat without being in the presence of heat. But that cannot happen with pain; an epistemic situation qualitatively like being in the presence of pain is itself pain. So to assert that pain is identical with physical-functional property *P* while conceding that this appears contingent you have to say that a person can be in the same epistemic, qualitative, situation as someone who feels pain without being in the presence of *P*, that is, pain; and that is incoherent (pp. 84-85).

- Kripke's argument is recapitulated as one that revolves around **the necessary identity of feeling pain with being in pain (in all possible worlds):** Pain **could be something different from a special physical situation** in the body **but could not be different from the feeling** of pain (*pain refers to pain in all possible worlds*);
- Pain **a priori refers to the feeling**, i.e., the phenomenal quality, and it is not inconsistent to think about feeling pain **without having anything physical or functional corresponding to this feeling** (this would be at least contingent).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- But the appearance of contingency would be explained rather differently on an account with the above structure. A physicalist could agree that whatever feels like pain is pain, and hence, given the identity, is *P*. What explains the "appearance of contingency" is that a phenomenal conception of pain and a conception of *P* in physical-functional terms can be cognitively independent—can have independent conceptual roles—even while introducing the same property (p. 85).

- With Loar's scheme (a-c), Kripke's argument, and especially the contingency it highlights, could be explained differently: the contingency of the identity of pain with a certain physical-functional state **can be totally explained** in terms of the **cognitive independence** of phenomenal conceptions and physical-functional conceptions of pain;
- This is, as we will see, the basic evidence for the 'phenomenal concepts strategy' (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- This leaves scope for acknowledging, despite one's own physicalism, that others can coherently think that pain may be unaccompanied by *P*. It seems that Kripke must deny that there can be pairs of terms that are independent conceptually but not in the properties they introduce, and therefore is committed to the semantic minor premise (p. 85).

- An advantage of Loar's reconceptualization is that now different people, depending **on what conceptions** they exploit, can have different views on the nature of one's pain: **one thing is exploiting phenomenal concepts, quite another is exploiting physical ones;**
- Kripke should deny that such a pair of terms can be conceptually independent without introducing different properties (such a reaction would **commit** him to the SMP: different terms commit to different properties).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Summary: Phenomenal concepts and Kripke's argument**

- **Kripke's argument:**
- Pain designs rigidly the feeling of pain in all possible worlds; even if we can a posteriori establish the identity of pain with C-fiber firing, this identity would be *contingent* (indeed not necessary): I can conceive of pain independently of such an association (and this makes it contingent); if the identity is contingent, we can admit kinds of pains that are not physically realized, and this suffices to reject physicalism;

- **Loar's recalibration**:
- The epistemic premise of the anti-physicalist argument (EP)—the cognitive independence of physical conceptions from phenomenal ones—*explains* the appearance of contingency in Kripke's case: since the conceptions are cognitively independent, it would be a mistake to infer the contingency of the identity; pain and C-fiber firing could be identical despite the independence between the physical and phenomenal conceptions; this suffices to readmit physicalism.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Consider a different physicalist reply to the single-premise epistemic argument, that is, to the argument in the form: "knowledge of physical-functional facts does not yield knowledge of the phenomenal facts; therefore phenomenal facts are not physical-functional." Lawrence Nemirow and David Lewis have replied that the premise is true only if you equivocate on "knowledge“ (p. 85).

- Loar now introduces the ‘ability’ objection against Jackson’s knowledge argument, invented by Lewis and Nemirow. The knowledge argument equivocates about 'knowledge'—that is, Mary’s new knowledge is ‘knowing how’ rather than ‘knowing that’. Hence, Mary does not learn any new knowledge(-that) outside her room. Let us see how Loar discusses it.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- The first occurrence can mean theoretical knowledge, the second the ability to discriminate introspectively or to imagine such states [Nemirow 1980; Lewis 1983]. But this allows that theoretical knowledge of certain physical-functional facts—which are the phenomenal facts—does not yield the other sort of knowledge of *those very facts*, namely the ability to discriminate them in introspection or to imagine them. Only physical-functional facts are involved, but there are *two epistemic relations* to them (p. 85).

- This reading of the 'ability' objection by Loar is especially interesting here because it is compatible with the idea that two types of knowledge **can be parallel with different conceptions** (and so with the phenomenal concepts view);
- 'Knowledge how' to discriminate qualities Q = **phenomenal conception** (exploits phenomenal concepts);
- 'Knowledge that' properties P are physically instantiated so and so = **physical conception** (exploits physical concepts).
- P=Q (at the level of properties and facts); KP≠KQ (at the level of epistemic relations and conceptions).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- Now this could suggest something false, that only the former kind of knowledge is *knowing that* such and such, is the possession of information, while the latter involves merely *knowing how* to identify or to imagine certain states. What I wish to say is different. Knowing how a state feels is knowing that it feels a certain way. Anti-physicalists are right in holding that it is the possession of distinctive information, for it involves a genuinely predicative component of judgment—what I am calling a phenomenal concept—whose association with any physical-functional concept is straightforwardly *a posteriori* (p. 85).

- Here Loar adds the new ingredient: 'Knowing how a state feels is knowing that it feels a certain way'. The 'knowing how' of the abilities objection can be considered **legitimate information** now, **but with a bonus**;
- It is **information that can be specified thanks to phenomenal concepts**—concepts that are especially designed to express/describe phenomenal qualities.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- A physicalist would be forced into the Nemirow/Lewis reply if he were to individuate bits of knowledge, cognitive information, in terms of possible world truth-conditions. For he would have to grant that, if knowing how a state feels is knowing that such and such, then it would be secured by knowing all the physical-functional facts (p. 86).

- Information, for a physicalist following the abilities objection, would need the same possible world truth-conditions, i.e., should be true in the same possible worlds.
- Knowing how a state feels, if it were legitimate information (and not an ability), would be secured by knowing all the physical facts.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- So a physicalist who counts the anti-physicalist premise about knowledge as true (on an interpretation) must deny either that cognitive information is individuated in terms of possible world truth-conditions or that "knowing the phenomenal facts" (in the sense that makes the premise true) is knowing that such and such, having distinctive information about it. I take Nemirow and Lewis to deny the latter, while I deny the former; there are ample independent reasons to deny it and it seems otherwise unmotivated to deny the latter (p. 86).

- Loar distances himself from the abilities reply: Nemirow and Lewis should deny either that information is individuated in terms of possible world truth-conditions or that "knowing the phenomenal facts" is having distinctive information about it. Loar reads them as denying the latter, while **he is eager to deny the first** (more on this below);

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- This is not a quibble about 'having information'. Consider the term 'male chick'. One can fully understand it, and then acquire the further ability to recognize instances. This, as I understand their view of knowing what (say) pain is like, is an example of what Nemirow and Lewis have in mind. Nothing prevents one from saying that in acquiring that further ability or know-how one 'acquires information', thus verbally meeting the objection (p. 86).

- Loar presents a useful example for discussing the controversial notion of having information in the knowledge argument. It is the ‘male chick’ example. It can be **first understood** and **then exemplified** (this second learning is analogous to the ‘know how’ in the ability objection to the knowledge argument) (the discussion goes on, see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- But as I see it, the most sensible view is that (over and above purely functional mental terms, assuming there are any) there are cognitively irreducible phenomenal terms in judgments and not merely abilities to apply independently mastered conceptions of the functional variety (p. 86).

- Loar, against the ability view, states that the putative irreducibility of phenomenal experiences should be attributed to what he calls 'phenomenal terms' or 'concepts';
- These are a further layer that is not touched by the ability view (though compatible with it);
- This means that in the KA what Mary learns on release is not just an ability but **legitimate** information (i.e., phenomenal information: **the experience *E* feels thus and so**).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- This may be seen in two ways. 1) One can have knowledge not only of the form "pains feel like such and such" but also of the form "if pains feel like such and such then Q". Perhaps you could get away with saying that the former expresses (not a genuine judgment but) the mere possession of recognitional know-how. There seems however to be no comparable way of accounting for the embedded occurrence of “feels like such and such” in the latter; it seems to introduce a predicate with a distinctive content. 2) For many conceptions of phenomenal qualities, there simply is no candidate for an independently mastered term instances of which one then proceeds to learn how to recognize: my conception of a peculiar way my left knee feels when I run (a conception that occurs predicatively in various judgments) is not my knowing how to apply an independently understood predicate (p. 86).

- For example, while judgements like “pains feel like such and such” can perhaps be assimilated to some kind of ‘know how’ or recognitional capacities, conditional expressions like “if pains feel like such and such then Q” imply that **these are genuine contents** and **not only such capacities** or **know how**;
- The latter example involves genuine conceptual content; hence, we should admit, among our concepts, phenomenal concepts exploited to target phenomenal qualities. Such concepts, furthermore (2), do not require independently mastered terms (they are acquired during learning along the rest of the language);
- 2: we cannot learn a term T and only then learn how to apply it (e.g. how my knee feels when I run). [Think also about Mary learning ‘RED’ inside the b/w room, and then learning how to recognize red things? Is that plausible?] So, phenomenal information must be legitimate.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 1. Anti-Physicalism
- By all appearances, one has distinctive phenomenal concepts that are connected with physical-functional concepts only *a posteriori*. The 'knowing how' view is hard put to explain this; and it would not be cost-effective to defend that view by insisting, contrary to powerful intuition, that the only components of judgment that could count as genuine phenomenal concepts are equivalent to certain physical-functional concepts *a priori* (pp. 86-87).

- Loar declares that we can admit phenomenal concepts as a posteriori associated with certain physical-functional concepts. This is a problem for the ability view: it does not seem capable to explain these examples (like the conditional above);
- To defend this view, subscribers of the 'ability hypothesis' should defend the *a priori equivalence* between phenomenal concepts and physical-functional concepts (but, if they are equivalent, why are phenomenal qualities so interesting and so special? Why are we puzzled about them?). This would mean denying EP (cognitive independence).
- N.B. For them, we can have legitimate concepts only for 'knowledge that'. Hence, there is a genuine problem for the ability view.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Loar on phenomenal concepts and the ability hypothesis**

- **The ability hypothesis**
- Genuine information is characterized in terms of possible world truth conditions;
- Because of this, if phenomenal information were legitimate information, Mary would know everything already inside the room;
- What is learned on release is just an ability, and this rules out the possibility of learning new information;

- **Phenomenal concepts**
- Phenomenal information is legitimate information because we can embed phenomenal judgements in conditionals, and this is evidence of legitimate content (the embedding test);
- Mary inside the room knows all the facts conceived and described in physical terms/concepts;
- What is learned on release is a new type of information concerning the very same facts, but in different (phenomenal) terms/concepts. Corollary: this does not rule out the possibility of learning new abilities.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- A first approximation to an account with the requisite structure is this: phenomenal concepts are *recognitional/imaginative* concepts. Given a normal background of cognitive capacities, certain recognitional or discriminative dispositions suffice for having specific recognitional concepts, which is just to say, suffice for the capacity to make judgments that depend specifically on those recognitional dispositions (p. 87).

- First definition of phenomenal concepts: certain **recognitional/discriminative dispositions suffice for having specific recognitional/phenomenal concepts**;
- When we have discriminative abilities, we can learn concepts that target the recognized phenomenal qualities.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- Simple such judgments have the form: the object (event, situation) *a* is *one of that kind*, where the cognitive backing for the predicate is just a recognitional disposition, i.e. a disposition to classify objects (events, situations) together, that often but not inevitably is linked with a specific imaginative capacity. It is a basic fact about our cognitive set-up that recognitional dispositions can suffice for mental predicates with specific conceptual roles, and in that way create cognitive content (p. 87).

- Loar provides further details: Phenomenal predicates are **rooted in recognitional dispositions**; Phenomenal terms are **functionally characterized** terms like any other;
- Our classificatory abilities involve dispositions to classify 'experiences' and 'qualitative aspects' as well as facts and events. This suffices for dispositions backing phenomenal judgements/concepts.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- And, I wish to say, it is also a fact about our cognitive set-up that such recognitional concepts can be cognitively independent of *referentially equivalent* concepts whose roles are determined by some background theory (say physical-functional concepts), so that no information about x couched in the latter terms on its own enables one to make a judgment exercising a recognitional/imaginative concept, e.g. a judgment that x feels thus and so (p. 87).

- Another crucial feature is the **cognitive independence** of phenomenal concepts from other referentially equivalent concepts;
- That 'x feels such and such' is cognitively independent from judgements like 'this is x'.
- 'These vegetables are delicious'
- is cognitively independent from 'the vegetables are on the table' (**even** in the case in which we are referring to the very same vegetables).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- A pair of concepts of the two kinds may, as I put it earlier, converge on a property, may have that property as their common reference, in the following way. A recognitional concept may involve the ability to class together, to discriminate, things that have a given objective property. Say that if a recognitional concept is related thus to a property, the property *triggers* applications of the concept. Then the property that triggers the concept is the semantic value or reference of the concept; the concept directly refers to the property, unmediated by a higher order reference-fixer (p. 87).

- A single property can be specified differently by using different terms or vocabularies: one thing is to specify its aspects in physical/functional terms; quite another is to specify that property in phenomenal terms;
- If a phenomenal concept C is related to a property P, then P triggers applications of C. The property in this case is the referent of the concept (such a referent can be fixed independently by other non-phenomenal concepts applying to it);
- We can have physical properties that trigger physical concepts and phenomenal properties that trigger phenomenal concepts (and we know that phenomenal properties can turn out to be physical properties).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- Now suppose we have an independent account of what property a given theoretical concept refers to. Nothing prevents that property from being the property that triggers a given recognitional concept, and so the two concepts can converge in their reference despite their cognitive independence, the latter being a sort of brute psychological fact. The semantic minor premise is then falsified (pp. 87-88).

- The fact that two concepts can refer to the same property holds even if the concepts are mutually cognitively independent. Cognitive independence can be seen as a brute psychological fact (perhaps responsible of dualist intuitions). But if things are this way, the semantic minor premise is put in jeopardy.
- N.B. SMP: two predicates or concepts that are connected *only a posteriori* introduce *distinct properties*; if we can have two (independent) concepts connected to the same property, and discover their connection a posteriori (since they are cognitively independent), then SMP is false. (If SMP is false, anti-physicalist arguments relying on it are *just intuitive* arguments *deprived of further cogency*).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- Thus the judgments "the state *a* feels like that" and "the state *a* has physical-functional property *P*" can *have the same truth condition* even though their joint truth or falsity can be known only *a posteriori*. I mean, same condition-of-truth-in-a-possible-world. For what determines truth conditions is in part whatever determines the possible world satisfaction conditions of predicates; and if a phenomenal predicate directly refers to a physical property, then that property constitutes its satisfaction condition (p. 88).

- Again, as said, the state *a* can be characterized in phenomenal terms or in functional terms, even though such characterizations can be known to be both true **only a posteriori** (because these are cognitively independent);
- Furthermore, if phenomenal predicates refer to physical properties, then phenomenal predicates meet their satisfaction conditions only when applied to the proper referent (that is, the physical property);
- The same property can indeed determine the same satisfaction conditions for two independent concepts: 1) phen-concepts; 2) phys-funct-concepts. Such cognitively independent predicates are satisfied by the same property.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- More needs to be said about recognitional concepts, and about triggering. 1) I have said that such a concept is a recognitional disposition. Why not a recognitional *ability*? The reason is that this connotes achievement: it implies that a real property is reidentified. But the cognitive factors I mean can be ungrounded: a person might judge "once again something of that sort ... and yet again ..." quite unconfusedly, even though no real kind (of object, situation, or event) is thereby reidentified. Still, it is a feature of such a person's thoughts that he is disposed to judge "same ... same again ..." *as if* reidentifying a real kind; and that is what I mean by a mere recognitional disposition. Of course if the disposition is ungrounded, the recognitional concept lacks reference (p. 88).

- Why recognitional dispositions and not abilities? The disposition does not involve success per se, so dispositions are more in line with the possibility of error/failure;
- Abilities involve success; dispositions can be ungrounded, i.e., these are defeasible in certain circumstances—that is, they do not certify that the right reference to the triggering property is given;
- Abilities, finally, need an effective exploitation of the recognitional dispositions (and of the concepts).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- 2) In some cases, a recognitional disposition or ability is a disposition or ability to apply an *independent* term or concept, one whose initial mastery does not involve a specific recognitional ability. For example, a person might come to understand 'porcelain' from a technical description and only later learn visually, tactually and aurally to identify instances. That is not the phenomenon I mean.
- Suppose I go into the California desert and spot a succulent I have never seen before; lacking a name I may still come to recognize instances here and there. What I have acquired is the kind of recognitional disposition or ability I mean; it does not involve recognizing instances of an old term (p. 88).

- Furthermore, Loar presents a way in which we may learn how to apply an independently learned concept: this is the porcelain's example. We may learn about it in a technical description (or in a user's manual), and then learn how to identify proper instances; does it work? Does it save Lewis's idea that we can learn a concept C in the b/w room and then, on release, how to recognize stuff to which C properly applies?
- The example is not paradigmatic of concept learning/possession/application (it is more an edge case); this can be shown by thinking about more common cases, such as that about the succulent;
- According to the succulent's example, such recognitional dispositions do not involve, per se, the possession of any concept (but they ground concept learning, in principle).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- 3) Such a recognitional disposition need not involve demonstrative reference to a paradigm, need not have the form "is of the same type as that (remembered) one." One may forget formerly observed instances, and still judge "another one of those". An image may be involved, but it need not purport to be of a particular instance.
- 4) The recognitional disposition need involve no analysis into component features; it can be irreducibly 'gestalt' (pp. 88-89).

- Reference to a paradigmatic case is not necessary for recognitional abilities and dispositions. Simply to judge "another one of those" is enough to implement the disposition (a simple 'image' would do);
- Such abilities and dispositions need not involve any analysis into smaller components. They can be like gestalt units (just the ensemble counts for the recognitional disposition).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- 5) It may intrinsically involve an independent concept in the following way, quite different from the 'porcelain' example: in identifying something as of a specific recognitional type, one may presuppose that it is of a type more general than the putative recognitional type itself, e.g. a physical thing, a plant, a dog. Each implementation of a recognitional disposition may have the form, as it were, 'physical thing of that type', or 'internal state of mine of that type', and so on (p. 89).

- Instantiation of recognitional dispositions does not require a specific lack of generality, and indeed, dispositions easily associate with expressions like 'physical thing of that type', or 'internal state of mine of that type': these are not conceptual in the full sense, but still possess the capacity to point to items of many kinds as belonging to a general type,
- E.g., a person, perhaps a small child, who evidently lacks the concept 'dog' may utter, in front of a dog, something like the following: «it seems to be one of those creatures/animals that bark».

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- Triggering. We do not require a philosophical explication of what it is for a property to be the one that triggers a given recognitional concept. Think of some psychophysiology experiment, in which the experimenter tries to determine which internal property her subject discriminates when saying "again" ... "yet again." There seems no special philosophical problem in the idea that there is a best possible answer to the experimenter's question, however difficult it may be to come up with (p. 89).

- What does ‘triggering’ mean here? There is nothing special about this common-sense usage;
- A property that we are somehow able to recognize *as the same* (or as belonging to a same type) can trigger our use of the relevant phenomenal concept, provided we are equipped with this conceptual capacity (otherwise the property just triggers the disposition).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- It may be objected that appealing to 'recognitional dispositions' does not help to explicate non-circularly 'having a recognitional concept', for 'recognitional' itself implies the exercise of concepts. Perhaps so. The point here, though, is not to explicate a cognitive feature in non-cognitive terms, but to call attention to an intuitively evident phenomenon, one that any cognitive psychology ought to acknowledge (p. 89).

- True enough, there is a potential issue of circularity lurking in the backstage. Anyway, it is not something to worry much about here;
- What matters is just that we are dealing with an *evident phenomenon* in our cognitive lives. We testify everyday our possession of such abilities.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- The anti-physicalist epistemic argument does not require that specific phenomenal qualities correspond to specific terms in English. Rather, the anti-physicalist intuition appeals to intuitive aspects of mental states, which it is natural to think of, whether in the presence of an actual occurrence or in imagination, in terms such as 'like this', or 'what it's like to be in that situation.' So the anti-physicalist should agree that phenomenal concepts are recognitional/imaginative concepts; it accommodates in a natural way our having intuitive conceptions of mental qualities to which no terms in our public language need correspond. But of course I am arguing that that undercuts the semantic minor premise (p. 89).

- Loar claims that also anti-physicalist philosophers have **no problems accepting** phenomenal concepts: these **preserve** the qualitative aspects of experience; they work both online and offline (as in imagination); they explain our intuitions about qualities concerning our mental lives;
- But, at the end of the day, the phenomenal concepts strategy **undercuts SMP*** (and with it, the cogency of the knowledge argument as being not just intuitive or intuition-based).
- *SMP: two predicates or concepts that are connected only a posteriori introduce distinct properties.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- Phenomenal concepts and physical-functional concepts appear to introduce distinct *modes of presentations* of states. That could seem to imply that they present distinct aspects of states. But, we may say that a phenomenal quality does not present itself in introspection as a physical property means only that phenomenal/recognitional concepts do not cognitively imply physical/functional theoretical concepts. The intuition that there are distinct modes of presentation is all right; it is explained by a distinctness in concepts, and does not require a distinctness in features, aspects, properties (pp. 89-90).

- Loar makes an important distinction explicit (we already saw it):
- Phenomenal concepts and functional concepts, when applied to referent R, introduce **different** (and mutually independent from a cognitive point of view) **modes of presentation** of R;
- This is explained by the fact that we have different concepts (phenomenal and functional/physical); furthermore, we **do not need** any difference in properties or features to establish a difference in concepts like this.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 2. Recognitional phenomenal concepts
- A phenomenal concept perhaps typically involves not merely a recognitional disposition but also an image; and so, as a psychological state in its own right, a phenomenal *concept*, given its connection with imaging, is far more similar (in some intuitive sense) to a phenomenal state than either is to the psychological state of having a given physical-theoretical concept. When we then bring concepts of the two kinds together in our philosophical ruminations, they are themselves as psychological states so different that the illusion is created that their references must be different. It is as though anti-physicalist intuitions rest on a resemblance theory of mental representation, as though we conclude from the lack of resemblance in our physical-functional and phenomenal *conceptions* a lack of sameness in the properties they refer to (p. 90).

- Being these concepts different (like an **image** on the one hand and a **functional concept** on the other hand), they can bring about the illusion that they have different referents;
- Sometimes, Loar argues, anti-physicalist intuitions **seem to rely on a resemblance theory** of mental representation: since we do not find resemblances between phenomenal and functional conceptions, we **tend to conclude** that such conceptions refer to different things. But this is wrong, as the phenomenal concepts strategy claims.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- Ascriptions of phenomenal qualities to others ostensibly refer to properties that others may have independently of our ascribing them; one's conceptions of the phenomenal states of others are realist. But at the same time they are *projections* from one's own case: they have the form "x has a state of this sort", where the demonstrative gets its reference from an actual or possible state of one's own, and if one conceives of a phenomenal state one has not experienced, that is by analogy with, or by construction out of, those one has experienced (p. 90).

- In attributing phenomenal states to others, people are normally realists, but this mechanism is **based on a kind of projection**:
- We 'project' *our* phenomenal states onto others, and our projections have the form "x has a state of this sort".

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- Phenomenal qualities are sometimes spoken of as "subjective", properties of which one can fashion no adequate conception without having experienced at least closely related properties. Evidently physicalism must deny this, for it implies that phenomenal qualities are physical-functional properties capturable in physical-functional terms. But it is consistent with physicalism that other-directed phenomenal *concepts* are subjective in the sense of projections from one's own case (p. 90).

- This projective mechanism is also capable of explaining the typical **intuitions about the subjective character** of phenomenal states;
- This is prima facie a problem with the physicalist idea that such states can be characterized as functional (and that phenomenal qualities at the bottom are functional-physical properties) – as functional terms can be stated objectively; so, what about the appearance of subjectivity?
- This subjective aspect in terms of projection is compatible with physicalism, since **the projection exhausts the subjectivity involved**; the appearance of subjectivity is just applying concepts to others starting from our own cases.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- The question is whether other-directed phenomenal concepts can be identified with the recognitional/imaginative concepts I have characterized. The latters' important feature is their grounding in capacities to discriminate properties *in the having of them*. And so a question naturally arises how self-directed recognitional concepts can be applied to cases of which it makes no sense to say that one could directly apply those concepts (pp. 90-91).

- If direct experience **is the source** for applying phenomenal concepts, we can ask whether we can apply them also to cases where there are **no direct experiences**—as in the case of projection to others. Let us see the details.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- The question might be turned aside if there were some further ingredient of phenomenal concepts that is as conceptually specific, so to speak, as recognitional capacities and is unproblematically other-directed. And perhaps that is simply the capacity to imagine the phenomenal states of others. But how does an image in my mind refer to a property of your mind? It seems not implausible in general that images refer by their grounding in recognitional capacities; but then we are brought back to the fact that phenomenal recognitional capacities are not of the kind that can be directed at others (p. 91).

- Perhaps this may depend on some feature that is specific to phenomenal concepts, and perhaps **it may depend on our capacities to use imagination**;
- How can imagined qualities in my mind refer to actual qualities in your mind?
- This question signals once again that our recognitional capacities are grounded **in our experiences** and **not in others**'. So, what is Loar's reply?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- Now I mention these points because some version of them seems likely to arise. But in fact it is not necessary that a recognitional capacity itself be other-directable to serve as that which is conceptually specific in an other-directed concept. Self-directed phenomenal concepts may retain their integrity, in opposition to the strong tendency in recent years to suppose that all legitimate mental concepts must be equally self- and other-predicable. But nothing prevents incorporating self-directed recognitional concepts in projective concepts: *x is in a state that has this sort of quality*—where "this sort of quality" is schematic for a self-directed recognitional concept that picks out a property that is actually or potentially a property of one's own, via the peculiarly self-directed recognitional capacity that backs it up (p. 91).

- These are indeed difficulties that the phenomenal concepts strategy is supposed to address;
- There is, however, a simple way to show how phenomenal concepts retain their integrity when such predicates also apply to others' states:
- Nothing prevents me from uttering such things as "George is in a painful state that has *this sort* of quality."
- A kind of **empathic projection** permits us to **transmit** 'the sort of quality' we **are referring to** to analogue experiences that may be inferred given certain (**indirect**—that is non introspective) **evidence**. E.g., I see George behave just like I do when I feel like X.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- The intuitive idea that we ascribe phenomenal states by projecting them has been much criticized by analytic philosophers, by and large, as it seems to me, because of public-verificationist views on concept formation. But one may see things as follows. There is no problem in general about predicates of the form "*x* has this sort of thing", where the demonstrative reference to a property is grounded in a recognitional capacity that is acquired independently of *x*. And what is wrong in the idea of essentially self-directed recognitional capacities, abilities to detect properties in the having of them? Taking these together, projective phenomenal concepts appear prima facie unproblematic […] (p. 91).

- Loar is honest in recognizing the skeptical attitude of analytic philosophers against this sort of projection, largely due to their popular view that concept formation is bound to exploit public and verifiable criteria;
- Predicates of the form "x has this sort of thing" are not problematic in general because the **demonstrative reference to a property** is **anchored on a recognitional capacity** acquired 'independently' of x;
- The direct source of our recognitional capacity in the act of recognizing **tracks the application** of the phenomenal concept, **not the referent** of its application (which is **shared** and the crux of the projection).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- That our conceptions of the phenomenal states of others involve projective concepts of this sort explains, given the semantics of self-directed recognitional/imaginative concepts, how physicalism can be compatible with the anti-physicalist intuition. It shows how it can be true that "she feels like that" and "she has such and such physical- functional property" may always be correlated at best *a posteriori*, even if they have the same possible world truth condition (p. 92).

- Again, the phenomenal concepts strategy, and its projective mechanism explains the anti-physicalist intuition of their subjective character and is compatible with establishing only a posteriori correlations and full-blooded identifications between phenomenal states and physical properties;
- It is because we have no direct access to the feelings of the person we are ascribing certain phenomenal properties to, that our phen-conceptions and our phys-conceptions can be correlated at best a posteriori.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- An anti-physicalist should regard it as evidently true that other-directed phenomenal concepts are projective. Indeed it is anti-physicalists who typically stress that phenomenal ascriptions project a conception that one acquires from one's own case. What counts substantively against the anti-physicalist in the foregoing is the treatment of self-directed recognitional/imaginative concepts. If the idea of projective concepts is unobjectionable, this semantic treatment of first-person phenomenal concepts shows that the unexceptionable anti-physicalist premise—that physical-functional conceptions of others are always related *a posteriori* to phenomenal conceptions—does not entail anti-physicalism (p. 92).

- Anti-physicalists can and should accept this projective nature of phenomenal concepts (as it preserves their intuitions);
- So the real point is the treatment of self-directed recognitional/imaginative concepts: if the anti-physicalist accepts this, then his strong anti-physicalist premise does not entail anti-physicalism anymore.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- The upshot then is this. Other-directed phenomenal concepts fail to be "physical-functional concepts" because they contain self-directed phenomenal concepts. What is left out conceptually by a physical-functional description of another person is that she is in a state that is identical with a certain actual or possible phenomenal state of one's own. It is in this sense that other-directed phenomenal concepts are subjective. At the same time, the realist import of other-directed phenomenal ascriptions is accounted for. My conceiving another's phenomenal states is not (as such) imagining what it would be like for me to be in that person's situation. Rather I ascribe a property that is realizable independently of my conception (p. 92).

- Loar finally makes the engine of his argument completely explicit:
- Phenomenal concepts differ from functional concepts **because they contain self-directed recognitional capacities**;
- What physical-functional descriptions of another person leave out conceptually is that **she is in a condition that is identical with a specific phenomenal state of one's own**. This is the boundary of subjectivity (more on this subjectivity below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- You can ascribe an objective property—one completely expressible in the objective terms of natural science—under a subjective conception: "*x* has what I would have were I to feel this." Thomas Nagel writes that mental facts are "accessible only from one point of view". This does reflect something about phenomenal *concepts*; they are in some intuitive sense "from one point of view", subjective. In what sense? (p. 92).

- Phenomenal concepts are perspectival, i.e., they are from a point of view (more on this below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- This could seem to mean that having such concepts presupposes *having had* properties of the kind they stand for; but it appears that we can imagine being endowed (by a god or super-scientist) with appropriate recognitional capacities, and hence with such concepts, without having had appropriate experiences. Perhaps this is it: phenomenal concepts are subjective, or from a point of view, because they involve capacities to discriminate certain states in the having of them, and also, perhaps, imaginative capacities that are anchored in such recognitional capacities. If that is it, then Nagel takes a correct observation about concepts and draws a wrong conclusion about facts and properties. For concepts can in that sense be from one point of view and nevertheless introduce properties that are exhaustively capturable in objective science (pp. 92-93).

- Loar introduces an interesting possibility: points of view do not necessarily involve facts which are subjective; we can imagine points of view as perspectives one can have on objective facts. If things stand this way, Nagel's reasoning is not conclusive, and the existence of points of view in phenomenal experiences does not involve necessarily irreducibly subjective properties.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 3. Projective phenomenal concepts
- Does a fully objective description of reality not still leave something out, viz. the subjective conceptions? This is a play on "leave something out". A complete objective description leaves out subjective conceptions, not because it cannot fully characterize the properties they discriminate or fully account for the concepts themselves as psychological states, but simply because it does not employ them (p. 92).

- At this point, Loar asks the following question: Does an objective description of reality not still leave something out? There is a sense in which we can reply in the affirmative: objective descriptions of reality leave subjective conceptions out because they are not employed in the objective description—and not because these are supposed to be impossible to characterize in objective terms.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- Does the projection analysis and the theory of self-directed phenomenal concepts dissolve the Other Minds problem? It would seem so. Any empirical reason for thinking another person is in the physical-functional state that in me is identical with feeling such and such would be an equally good reason to regard the other as feeling such and such. Statements of physical resemblance between another's states and my phenomenal states would close the question (p. 93).

- If a person P is in my identical physical-functional state S, in which I feel the qualitative state Q, then P feels Q as well while in S.
- This prima facie solves the problem of other minds. There is indeed a presumptive reason why resemblance in phenomenal states and in physical condition is the basis for the legitimate attribution of such states. Are things that simple?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- But it will be objected that there is a further question. When the other minds problem first struck one, the thought that other persons are physically very similar to one doubtless seemed insufficient. Given a complete account of another person's physical-functional *resemblance* to myself, I still without inconsistency wondered: but does she also resemble me in this way-does she feel *this*? (p. 93).

- Loar, in fact, provides the rationale of the original philosophical worry: given a complete physical account of another person's physical-functional resemblance to myself, **I can always ask whether that person undergoes the same experience**. Hence, resemblance of state seems to be insufficient. Is the problem of other minds still an insurmountable obstacle?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- The reaction is understandable, but misguided. 1) With the anti-physicalist I suppose that it is only from awareness of one's own states that a question about phenomenal qualities arises in the first place. Otherwise there is no reason to think that a full physical description of another creature omits something-namely, information about this sort of thing. Even with bats, what one lacks are determinations of a determinable the conception of which– *being a phenomenal state*– derives from one's own case (p. 93).

- There are two reasons why Loar thinks this reaction is misguided: questions about the feel of mental states raise first of all awareness of one's own states; even asking about bats' states is the starting point (goes on below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- But what reason is there in the first-person case to *doubt* that what one is aware of is something physical? We have seen only the epistemic argument: physical-functional descriptions are correlated a posteriori with phenomenal conceptions of one's states. But that argument is only as strong as the semantic minor premise. And that premise has little to recommend it, given the distinction between the cognitive role of a concept and its reference-potential. Furthermore, we *otherwise* have every inductive reason to suppose that what we are aware of in introspection is physical, for we have every inductive reason to suppose we are organisms explainable in physical terms (pp. 93-94).

- *What is the reason to doubt* that what one is aware of is physical? As we know, correlations hold only a posteriori—but we also know that this holds as much as the SMP. We saw that the SMP has problems.
- To the contrary, we have all kinds of inductive evidence to think about ourselves as physical organisms and our introspective states as connected to our physical nature.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- 2) As earlier noted, the anti-physicalist ought to accept that ascriptions of phenomenal states to others involve projective concepts, for that is just the idea that understanding phenomenal concepts derives from one's own case. But in the light of 1) there then can be no problem of other minds (p. 94).

- A second reason derives from the fact that anti-physicalists must also accept the projective character of ascriptions of phenomenal states, starting from one's own case. But given point (1), there cannot be no problem of other minds (more on this below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- How could there be? The question is whether another person has *this* (a phenomenal quality of any determinateness, from seeing red to feeling-something-or-other.) But if one has no reason to doubt that *this* is identical with a physical property, and no reason to doubt that another person physically resembles one in that respect, one cannot then consistently doubt that the person has *this* (p. 94).

- If seeing red entails in me the quality Q, what reasons can I have to doubt that this is something physical? What reasons can I have to doubt that another person resembles me in seeing red and in feeling Q?
- To raise the question about which state a person is entertaining entails implicit acceptance of those unmotivated doubts (but without such doubts, it is unmotivated).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- It goes without saying that, for *any* physical-functional property *P*, it is conceptually coherent to suppose that another person has it, as one conceives it in physical-functional terms, and to doubt that he has some particular phenomenal quality, as conceived in phenomenal terms; that has been central to this paper. But it does not mean that one can coherently wonder whether another person in physical-functional state *P* has a phenomenal state with *this* quality, *if* one has acknowledged that one's concept of "this quality" refers to whatever property the concept discriminates in oneself (what else?) and that in oneself it discriminates the property *P* (p. 94).

- We have no trouble ascribing physical properties to other people; we can coherently doubt that the other person entertains some phenomenal quality conceived in phenomenal terms; this does not mean that we can coherently ask whether another person in a physical state (e.g., P) has a phenomenal state with a certain quality, as we can discriminate in our experience that this feeling is correlated with the property P. It is just induction.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- Why then is there the illusion of a problem, of a further question? It is as if one wishes to do to others as one does to oneself-apply phenomenal concepts directly, that is, exercise the relevant recognitional capacities. But in a sense one cannot conceive of others' states precisely as one conceives of one's own; one cannot apply to them those self-directed recognitional/imaginative concepts. There are of course common predications, for what I have called "projective" concepts are as applicable to oneself as to others. But the self-directed cores of such concepts are not other-applicable (p. 94).

- How does one explain the illusion of a problem? There seems to be something quite odd about applying projective generalizations to others, starting from our self-directed experiences. Is this true? (more on this below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 4. Knowledge of other minds
- This can present itself as an epistemological barrier, as something that makes it logically impossible to know certain facts. But that is not the real nature of the phenomenon. Doubtless more can be said in explanation of the *naturalness* of the conflation of the innocuous conceptual fact with a noxious epistemological disability. It is not easy to shake the grip of that conflation nor therefore easy to dispel the illusion of anti-physicalism and the problem of other minds. The cognitive remedy, the fortification against the illusion, is the idea of projective concepts coupled with the observation that there is no reason to doubt that it is physical-functional properties that self- directed recognitional/imaginative concepts discriminate (pp. 94-95).

- There are indeed facts about this human tendency to see problems here. It is not easy to avoid the grip of this tendency to fall into anti-physicalism or into the problem of other minds. The only remedy for this tendency can be the idea of projective(phenomenal) concepts combined with the observation that there is no reason to question that it is physical-functional features that self-directed recognitional concepts differentiate.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- Some functionalists might think this account ignores a major feature of our conceptions of the mental, namely, their systematic structure. We have conceptions of different sensory modalities, and of intra-modality comparisons along various spectra, of pitch, timbre, hue, brightness, shape, size, texture, acidity, acridity, etc. These could be seen as subsidiary functional organizations within a theory of the mental. Anti-naturalists may share something of the point, wanting to speak of phenomenological structures. My account might seem to imply that phenomenal concepts are atomistic, unstructured, unsystematic; for are these recognitional dispositions not in principle independent of each other? (p. 95).

- Loar asks whether the phenomenal concepts strategy violates the constraint of systematicity that seems compelling for the functional architecture of mind and cognition. Also, phenomenological conceptions of the mind acknowledge such constraints. How does the phenomenal concepts strategy fare here?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- We have phenomenal recognitional concepts of various degrees of generality. Some are of highly determinate qualities, and others are of phenomenal determinables: crimson, dark red, red, warm-colored, colored, visual. The last is the recognitional conception of a whole sensory modality. And there is the most general of all, the recognitional concept *phenomenal* (state, quality), the highest ranking phenomenal determinable. (This *is* a recognitional concept. One discriminates phenomenal states from non-phenomenal states, feeling a twinge from having a bruise, hearing a chirp from jerking a knee, and that highly general discriminative capacity is the basis of the concept *phenomenal quality*.) (p. 95).

- Indeed, we have many degrees of generality for phenomenal concepts. Many examples follow (crimson, dark red, red, warm-colored, colored, visual); then we exploit such concepts already in distinguishing between **phenomenal and non-phenomenal** states as: “feeling a twinge from having a bruise, hearing a chirp from jerking a knee”).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- There are also relational concepts: quality *x* is a determinate of quality *y*; quality *x* is more like quality *y* than like quality *z*; quality *x* is of a different modality from quality *y*. These are also recognitional concepts: dispositions to classify together, on phenomenal grounds, certain pairs and triples of phenomenal qualities. Combining them yields complex conceptions of abstract phenomenal structures, e.g. of a structured sensory modality. One's general conception of such a structure is in effect one's ability to exercise in concert a group of such general phenomenal concepts (pp. 95-96).

- Qualities tracked by phenomenal concepts are relational in character; they work inside comparisons and more in general in relating different qualities. To use any of them amounts to using them in relation to the other concepts in the bunch.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- Now it is important that our conceptions of such phenomenal structures, while abstract, are yet *phenomenal* conceptions. No purely *functional* conception of a complex structure, however isomorphic to a phenomenal-structure conception it may be, will be cognitively equivalent to it; purely functional conceptions ignore that the structures are of phenomenal similarity relations, of phenomenal determinateness, and so on (p. 96).

- We should always keep in mind, however, that phenomenal conceptions are never purely functional. Phenomenal concepts directly track phenomenal aspects; purely functional characterizations neglect these aspects.
- N.B. This follows from EP (i.e., the **cognitive independence** of phen-conceptions from phys-conceptions); and it is certainly compatible with it – hence this is not surprising at all. Furthermore, as we know, their correlation, because of the cognitive independence, can be observed **only a posteriori** (but we also know that, against typical anti-physicalist arguments, this does not lead to establishing that we are talking of different facts/properties).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- But given the falsity of the semantic minor premise, that is no impediment to holding that those abstract phenomenal conceptions can have purely functional or physical-functional structures as their *references*. For such structures may well be what these abstract phenomenal recognitional capacities in fact discriminate. Indeed we may go on to say that, if our phenomenal conceptions are to be fully vindicated by brain-science, then the brain must have a certain functional structure; any possible totality of (as it were) semantic values for our phenomenal conceptions must have certain functional structures. This perhaps explains the strong intuition of some commonsense functionalists that phenomenal concepts are functional concepts, without our having to accept that counterintuitive view (p. 96).

- SMP being false, Loar suggests that we can understand phenomenal concepts as referring to certain physical/functional structures/states. Furthermore, if phenomenal concepts are indeed bound to play some role in brain science, they must be related to some physical/functional structures/processes in the brain.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- “Can your projection analysis accommodate the thought that a bat has highly specific, determinate, phenomenal states that are not like anything I can experience or imagine? It seems to me that your program will require you to bring in the bat's own recognitional/imaginative capacities, such as they are” (p. 96).

- Dualist’s objection: can projective phenomenal concepts explain the specific character of bats’ experiences (Nagel’s challenge)? It seems that to answer this question, one needs to take some account of how the recognitional system works in bats. What is Loars’s reply? (see below).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- When one thinks about a bat's sonar phenomenal states, one thinks about them as phenomenal, that is, as having in common with my phenomenal states, what I discriminate them all as having in common, and that may be something physical-functional. One also thinks of them as of a distinctive *phenomenal kind or modality*, different from one's own states, of roughly that order of determinateness at which one's visual states are marked off from one's auditory states. One has such a general concept from one's own case, and one can project it. That concept may in fact denote a general physical-functional property, of sets of phenomenal states. And one thinks of the bat's sonar states as exhibiting *phenomenal variation* of different degrees of specificity. These conceptions of general phenomenal structure, determinable-determinate relations, resemblance relations, and so on, we have, as I have said, from our own case (pp. 96-97).

- Bats' sonar phenomenal states must be phenomenal just like ours, and indeed, such discriminatory capacities can depend on some physical/functional processes. Nothing in the bats' example prevents us from admitting this possibility. One physical discriminatory system can be attached to different sensory systems and determine different phenomenal qualities. So far, so good.
- I can imagine a surgical operation in which my visual system is removed and substituted by a sonar system: will I cease to have phenomenal qualities about the things around me? For sure, these will be new and different phenomenal qualities: does this mean that they must refer to different facts/properties? No, they can be sonarlike experiences determined by the very physical facts/properties that in the past determined my visual experiences.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 5. Phenomenal structure, and exotic others
- Now nothing in the foregoing requires that a necessary condition of having certain phenomenal qualities is having the capacity to discriminate them. (See however the discussion below of transparency.) We ascribe to bats not phenomenal concepts but phenomenal states; and we do that by projecting our own phenomenal concepts in the manner characterized above. Other-directed phenomenal conceptions are of others' states, and not as such of their conceptions (p. 97) […].

- We can do that by projection: as we can project our phenomenal concepts to other people, we can project phenomenal states to bats.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 6. The concept "phenomenal concept“
- The thesis that phenomenal concepts are recognitional concepts, involving the ability to classify together certain states in the having of them, does not imply that every concept that satisfies the latter condition is a *phenomenal* concept. Consider blind sight, the odd ability of some persons who are partially blind (phenomenally speaking): when an object is placed before their eyes that they do not phenomenally "see", they nevertheless may correctly judge that, say, it is square. They do not know how they do it; no visual sensation tells them the object is square. Now we may analogously conceive of an ability to identify recurring *inner* states without a characteristic feeling: one might find oneself saying "there it is again", but not because of a specific experience (pp. 97-98).

- The definition of phenomenal concepts provided so far does not cover all possible cases. Blind sight is an example of an ability that is **disconnected from phenomenal qualities** in a relevant sense.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 6. The concept "phenomenal concept"
- So not just any ability to identify an inner state in the having of it suffices for having a phenomenal concept. Nor is there any other philosophical explication of "phenomenal concept"; the concept *of* a phenomenal concept is itself a sort of phenomenal concept and not open to neutral explication. For how else can one tell oneself what a phenomenal concept is than by saying: it involves the ability to re-identify and perhaps to imagine a feeling of a certain type, for example, feeling like this (p. 98).

- So, reidentification of a state S does not suffice, per se, for having a phenomenal concept PC. A kind of reidentifying experience **must always be involved** (such concepts cannot be grasped outside the circumstances and consequences of their application). So they cannot be explicated in other terms.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 7. Transparency
- It could seem the following is possible on my account: another person is in the state that in me amounts to feeling such and such, but sincerely denies feeling anything relevant. It may appear to have been left open that others have phenomenal states that are not introspectable at will, for no requirement of transparency has been mentioned. Then the property that is the referent of my concept *feeling like that* could, even if it occurs transparently in me, occur non-transparently in you. But (the objection continues) denying transparency is tantamount to allowing unconscious experiences; and it would not be unreasonable to say that the topic of phenomenal states is the topic of certain conscious states (p. 98).

- The requirement of transparency in conscious states seems to pose another challenge: if a concept or feeling that I have is transparent to me, **it could** be entertained **non-transparently** by someone else. But this would amount to admitting an unconscious experience; if phenomenal concepts are conceived in the effort of explaining conscious experiences, then something has gone badly wrong, or so it seems.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 7. Transparency
- There really is no issue here. Suppose that any phenomenal quality must be essentially transparent, and that no property I correctly identify as phenomenal can be realized in another non-transparently. If cognitive integration is essential to such properties, so be it; there is no reason to think that such integration itself is not a physical-functional property, as it were implicated by each phenomenal property (p. 98).

- Loar presents the following hypothesis: imagine that transparency is an essential property of phenomenal qualities; this would require that no one can entertain such property in a nontransparent way; this would involve a kind of cognitive integration; nothing in the world demands that we conceive of such an integration as different from, or irreducible to, physical properties.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 7. Transparency
- Now it is not obvious that phenomenal properties must be transparent in a cognitive sense. What about infants and bats? (Earlier it was observed that nothing in the present account requires bats to have phenomenal *concepts*.) There has always been a philosophical puzzle about how subtracting reflexive cognitive awareness from phenomenal or conscious states leaves something that is still phenomenal or conscious. But that puzzle is independent of the current theory. All that is implied here is that, if I have a conception of a phenomenal quality that is shared by me and an infant, my conception of it involves a recognitional/imaginative concept, and there is no reason why that phenomenal quality itself should not be a physical-functional property. Whatever indefinable, elusive aspect of phenomenal qualities might constitute their being conscious without requiring reflexive conceptualizability, there would be no reason to doubt it is a physical-functional property (pp. 98-99).

- Even the last putative puzzle concerning transparency—involving bats and infants that eminently lack concepts—does not pose an ultimate obstacle to the phenomenal concepts strategy. Whatever we find in the phenomenology of bats and infants, even if they lack concepts, such qualities should not be thought of as not reducible to physical properties; we simply have no reasons for this claim.

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 8. Functionalism
- There are two functionalist theses: that all concepts of mental states are functional concepts, and that all mental properties are functional properties. The first I rejected by accepting the anti-physicalist intuition; I agree with the anti-physicalist that phenomenal concepts cannot be captured in purely functional terms. Nothing however in philosophy prevents phenomenal properties from being functional properties. There are two possibilities: they are commonsense-functional properties, or they are psychofunctional. I take the latter to be the interesting one (p. 99).

- Loar distinguishes two versions of the very idea: 1) all concepts of mental states are functional; 2) all mental properties are functional. He rejects the first, accepting the anti-physicalist intuition (EP); he accepts the second, as there is no evidence to the contrary. This second view can be defined in terms of commonsense-functional properties or psychofunctional ones. Loar declares that he prefers the latter.

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 8. Functionalism
- Might the phenomenal quality of seeing red be identical with a property captured by a detailed psychofunctional theory? This would be so if the repeatable that triggers one's phenomenal concept "looks red" has psychofunctional, rather than say biochemical, identity conditions. This has been denied by anti-functionalist physicalists on two grounds, the possibilities of inverted qualia and of absent qualia, but I do not find these arguments persuasive (pp. 99).

- There are, however, two arguments against the viability of psychofunctionalism: ‘inverted qualia’ and ‘absent qualia’. Let us see the details.

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- 8. Functionalism
- The inverted qualia argument is […]advanced against identifying phenomenal qualities with […] functional properties […]. The position I espouse is agnostic: for all philosophers know, phenomenal qualities are psychofunctional properties. The opposing argument is that it is possible that the psychofunctional role that seeing red has in me is had in you by, as I would think of it, seeing green. If this is, as they say, metaphysically possible, then of course phenomenal qualities are not psychofunctional properties (pp. 99-100).

- The relevant possibility of inverted qualia is given by the metaphysical possibility that the psychofunctional property of seeing red for me is entertained by someone else by seeing green. This is not contradictory a priori. Does this suffice as an argument against psychofunctionalism?

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 8. Functionalism
- Now it seems that the only argument for the possibility is the *coherent conceivability* of inverted qualia. But this is just another version of the antiphysicalist epistemic argument: it is conceivable that any given psycho-functional state can occur without the seeing of green, and with the seeing of red, say; therefore the psychofunctional role and the phenomenal quality involve distinct properties. I am puzzled as to how a physicalist can accept this argument against functionalism and not also accept the analogous one against physicalism itself; there is as much, or as little, reason to accept the argument here as in the earlier case. Phenomenal concepts are cognitively independent of psychofunctional concepts, granted; it does not follow that concepts of the two sorts cannot introduce the same property (p. 100).

- Is it coherent to admit the conceivability of inverted qualia? Physicalists should be aware that this argument shares **the same structure as the anti-physicalist argument**—it presupposes that phenomenal concepts and psychofunctional roles are different things, but these can be the same (as we know from the falsity of SMP): “Phenomenal concepts are cognitively independent of psychofunctional concepts, granted; it does not follow that concepts of the two sorts cannot introduce the same property.”.

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- 8. Functionalism
- […] Block has advanced the […]absent qualia argument […]. Suppose the Chinese nation were organized so as to realize the psychofunctional organization of a person seeing green. Evidently the Chinese nation would not collectively be seeing green or having any other sensation. In this way any psychofunctional property could be realized without a given phenomenal quality, and hence cannot be identical with one. Now this argument could appear dialectically more telling than the inverted qualia argument, for it apparently rests on more than a conceptual possibility. It seems a plain truth that the Chinese people would not thereby be having a collective sensation. Surely it is barmy to be agnostic about that (p. 100).

- Block's argument (absent qualia): a functional property can be ascribed to a collective entity like China; phenomenal properties **cannot be collective in the same way**; hence, phenomenal properties **are different** from functional properties. This is surely more challenging than inverted qualia. Is there a reply?

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 8. Functionalism
- […] If the argument is not "they do not collectively have, by virtue of their psychofunctional organization, *what I have* when *this* occurs", then what is it? But if that is the argument, I must know, independently of the thought experiment, that in me the property of seeing green is not a psychofunctional property, know in other words that what I reidentify is not such a property. But I know no such thing. How could I possibly? (p. 100).

- The problem is as follows: can one know, without thought experiments, that seeing green is not a psychofunctional property? For Loar, no one can. And this should be enough (and defenders of thought experiments should tell us why such controversial context should count more than what we can realize in everyday experiences).

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 8. Functionalism
- Intuition counts strongly against applying phenomenal concepts to things that are not single organisms. But philosophical intuition has also counted strongly against applying such concepts even to other human physical systems. And that intuition, I have argued, counts for little. It seems to derive from the inability to apply self-directed phenomenal concepts to things other than oneself, and this inability signifies nothing. It is not that we are epistemologically barred from knowing whether the Chinese nation would then collectively be seeing green. Our ignorance is of our own states, and it prevents concluding anything substantive from thought experiments of this type. It is possible that phenomenal qualities are psychofunctional; and yet again for all philosophers know it is possible that, say, biochemical properties are essential to their individuation (pp. 100-101).

- Intuitions can be misleading (today, skepticism about intuition in philosophy is considered stronger than when this essay was written). The problem is instead that we do not know, based just on our self-knowledge, that certain properties are not functional. But again, we cannot abusively exploit thought experiments to try to assert this view if that is our realistic situation.

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 9. Incorrigibility
- Physicalism, it may be said, cannot acknowledge the incorrigibility of phenomenal judgments of the form "if feels like that". For surely there is no guarantee that a capacity for recognizing a given physical property does not at times misfire; and perhaps even more to the point, there can be no guarantee that to a given recognitional disposition there corresponds a repeatable physical property. Perhaps an anti-physicalist will grant that certain *kinds* of mistake about phenomenal qualities are possible; but one thing he presumably will insist on is this: we cannot be wrong in thinking that *there are phenomenal qualities* (p. 101).

- The tradition affirms that first-personal reports about phenomenal experiences are incorrigible (that is automatically authoritative). This is very Cartesian. Today, this is quite contested (think about illusions and hallucinations): they are first-personal but defeasible. Anti-physicalist philosophers want to affirm that it is incorrigible that there are qualities. Is PCS safe in this context?

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 9. Incorrigibility
- Now suppose it turned out that no system of physical-functional properties corresponded to the system of our phenomenal concepts. Would a physicalist not then have to say there are no phenomenal qualities? And is the fact that physicalism leaves this open not a serious problem? (p. 101).

- Loar imagines a situation in which we have evidence that phenomenal concepts do not refer to physical-functional properties: would physicalists be obliged to deny the existence of phenomenal qualities? And is it a problem if physicalists leave this issue open?

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 9. Incorrigibility
- […]What reason have we to think our phenomenal judgments discriminate real properties? Memory, one might say, cannot be that mistaken: we can hardly deny that present inner states resemble past states in ways we would recognize again. Despite this conviction however, if no system of physical-functional properties corresponded to one's putative phenomenal discriminations, an alternative to nonphysical qualities would be this: memory radically deceives us into thinking we discriminate internal features and non-randomly classify our own states. Strong evidence that no suitable physical-functional properties exist might amaze and stagger one. But strange things do happen. It would then have emerged that we are subject to a powerful illusion, a cognitive rather than a phenomenal illusion—we would be judging falsely that we discriminate real phenomenal properties (pp. 101-102).

- If no system of physical-functional properties corresponded to one's phenomenal discriminations, an alternative to nonphysical qualities would be this: memory radically deceives us into thinking we discriminate internal features and non-randomly classify our own states (without a correspondence with functional states we would get resemblances between random states). So any correlation between our discriminations and sensations would be just coincidental: is that possible?

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- **Phenomenal States**

- 9. Incorrigibility
- It does seem likely that we genuinely discriminate internal physical-functional states in introspection. But with that said, positing non-physical properties to forestall the possibility of radical error, however theoretically adventurous (even reckless), would in something like a moral sense still be rather faint-hearted. The whole point about the phenomenal is how it appears. And that means there is no introspective guarantee of *anything* beyond mere appearance, even of discriminations of genuine repeatables. The dualist balks at the implications and invents a realm of properties to ensure that the appearances are facts, but this does not respect the truly phenomenal nature of what is revealed by introspection at its least theoretical (p. 102).

- The possibility of error is always a case in point about introspection; any account that keeps (introspective) experience fixed and questions 'more objectively observable' properties (like physical-functional ones) commits one to a sloppy perspective, which tends to ignore the relevance of error. So, this move is not promising for the anti-physicalist.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 10. Sensation terms and phenomenal qualities
- Consider this objection. "Does it not follow from your account that, if no physical-functional properties are discriminated by our phenomenal conceptions, then there are no such states as *pains*, or *sensations*, or even *consciousness*?" It does not follow. What follows is that sensations, and consciousness itself, would (in that improbable case) not involve phenomenal qualities. Brain states could still have causal roles that make them sensations, without having properties that are genuinely marked off or discriminated by judgments of the form "feels like this, like that". Keep in mind that "phenomenal quality" is not introduced by abstraction from "pain" or "sensation", but rather as the generic term for qualities our conception of which derives from introspection, independently of English mental state terms (p. 102).

- Loar proposes the following objection: does the putative impossibility of discriminating physical properties by means pf phenomenal conceptions entail that we have no pain, consciousness, or sensations? No, it does not. We would just lose, in that case, the phenomenological aspects of our experiences (‘pain’ and ‘sensations’ are more general than phenomenal qualities as such - while for many qualities we do not have terms or words).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 10. Sensation terms and phenomenal qualities
- Suppose that on another planet we encounter creatures to which we find it thoroughly appropriate to ascribe pains, on the basis not only of their behavior but also of their having internal states (as we infer) produced by damage and burning, which they try instinctively to get out of, and so on. It is compatible with this that they share with you or me no psychofunctional or physical state that we specifically discriminate when we are in pain. It does not seem obviously misguided to insist nevertheless that they would be feeling pain. Now it should be clear what the conceivability of that would show: no specific phenomenal concept is part of our concept "pain“ (pp. 102-103).

- We can imagine a different planet where pains can be ascribed to inhabitants based on behavior (and ascribed internal states): this is compatible with the possibility that such aliens do not share with us physical or psychofunctional states; the concept of pain is not a phenomenal concept (it is more general).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States**

- 10. Sensation terms and phenomenal qualities
- If intuition insists that any pain must have a certain characteristic phenomenal quality, then the English term "pain", as one understands it, does in part express (counter to the supposition just entertained) a phenomenal concept. It is far from clear to me which, if any, English terms for mental states connote phenomenal qualities. But I do not think this matters in any fundamental way; intuition may in a given case favor asserting or denying that a given term expresses a given phenomenal concept, and either way it would be clear what then to say. I do not think these considerations create any further problem about our conceptions of phenomenal qualities. Nothing in philosophy should make one doubt either that such qualities are real or that they are physical (pp. 102-03).

- Loar concludes his article with a general skeptical statement about the role of intuitions in evaluating such arguments and scenarios. Any other issue concerning intuition about pain being phenomenal or not is not that important. This is just not what is at stake about phenomenal concepts. Hence, we should not worry about these.

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal States (RECAP)**

- **1) anti-physicalism:** anti-physicalist arguments rest on certain implicit premises like **EP** (cognitive independence of functional-conceptions from phenomenal-conceptions – and such independence is taken to imply differences in facts/properties) and **SMP** (two concepts that are connected only a posteriori introduce distinct properties); the phenomenal concept strategy **PCS** (1.a-c) illustrates the possibility of coherently saying that **SMP** is false—we have two conceptions (one physical/functional and another phenomenal) that can **refer** in independent ways **to the same fact/property**; PCS explains away the appearance of contingency in Kripke's argument (it is just cognitive independence); PCS explains the KA better than the ability hypothesis—Loar presents two arguments against this: 1)we can embed phenomenal judgments in conditionals—embedding test—and this proves it is legitimate content; 2) the ability hypothesis rests on a mythical view of concepts that magically activate themselves outside the b/w room; hence, PCS is better than the ability hypothesis;
- **2) recognitional concepts:** phenomenal concepts are based on recognitional capacities and dispositions; this dependence on recognitional dispositions is compatible with the cognitive independence (EP) of phenomenal conceptions from physical-functional conceptions; recognitional dispositions are triggered by properties (which are the referents of phenomenal concepts), hence the concept refers directly to the property (the phenomenal concept 'red' refers directly to the quality of redness as present in one's experience); again, two independent concepts (one functional/physical and another phenomenal) may refer to the same property: this is evidence that **SMP is false** (two independent conceptions connected only a posteriori **can introduce the same property**); recognitional dispositions have features 2.1-5; triggering is not philosophically sophisticated; phenomenal concepts and physical-functional concepts appear to introduce distinct modes of presentations of states: this is compatible with the falsity of **SMP**;
- **3) projective concepts:** ascriptions of phenomenal states to other people are typically realist; but they are also **projections** from one's own case; the fact that introspection is first-personal makes it special: it is the source phenomenon to understand the subjectivity of phenomenal states—that is we cannot access someone's else introspection; this is often exploited as a denial of physicalism: since phenomenal states are subjective, they cannot be functional/physical (which are objective)—hence these must track different facts/properties; Loar states that **PCS makes this subjective aspect of phenomenal states compatible with physicalism**; in fact, while the access is subjective (first-personal), nothing prevents attributing what I feel (the redness of this tomato) in the circumstances X to John in the same circumstances; people make these projections by attributing the determinable qualities that emerge as repeatable in one's experience; this projection exploits also some imaginative capacities; Loar discusses some objections (if contact with qualities in introspection is first-personal how can I attribute it to other people?); Loar replies that what is ascribed is a property independent from the way in which we conceive of it like "x has what I would have were I to feel this"; points of view are said to be incompatible with objective science (Nagel); Loar shows that the first-personal access to introspection is not sufficient to infer the subjectivity of the felt quality/property; someone may say that science leaves something out, i.e. subjective conceptions; Loar replies that they are left out only because in science we do something else (they are simply not exploited).

The knowledge argument and phenomenal consciousness

- **Phenomenal states (RECAP)**

- **4) other minds: PCS**, and the projective nature of ascribing phenomenal concepts, dissolves the problem of other minds **POM**; if a person P is in my identical physical-functional state S, in which I feel the qualitative state Q, then P feels Q as well while in S; objection: “Given a complete account of another person's physical-functional resemblance to myself, I still without inconsistency wondered: but does she also resemble me in this way-does she feel this?”; for Loar this follows only if 1) one has (reasonable) doubts that what one is aware of is something physical, and 2) that phenomenal concepts are not projective; since 1) and 2) do not hold, the problem is dissolved; what about the fact that we have intuitions about the **POM**: Loar says that it depends on the fact that we cannot apply phenomenal concepts directly to the introspection of someone else; this asymmetry is the source of skeptical doubts about other minds; the projective and recognitional nature of phenomenal concepts provides an explanation of this tendency as well;
- **5) phenomenal structures:** functionalists can claim **PCS** ignores the systematic structure of phenomenal states; such structures involve sensory modalities, their degrees and mutual relations; anti-naturalists typically claim the existence of phenomenological structures; Loar replies that **PCS** conceives phenomenal recognitional concepts with various degrees of generality (‘red’, ‘crimson’, ‘visual’ and so on); they are also relational, i.e. they fit in comparisons between states, qualities, feelings; such phenomenal conceptions are abstract but phenomenal and not functional; the falsity of **SMP**, permits us to admit that phenomenal conceptions can refer to what functional conceptions refer to, even if they are cognitively independent; objection: "Can your projection analysis accommodate the thought that a bat has highly specific, determinate, phenomenal states that are not like anything I can experience or imagine? …your program will require you to bring in the bat's own recognitional/imaginative capacities, such as they are; reply: We ascribe to bats not phenomenal concepts but phenomenal states; and we do that by projecting our own phenomenal concepts […](p.97);
- **6) the concept ‘phenomenal concept’:** not all recognitional concepts are phenomenal concepts; cases of blindsight, for example, are recognitional but not phenomenal: people are blind but capable of recognizing objects correctly; hence not all recognitional dispositions ground phenomenal concepts; the concept of a phenomenal concept is itself a sort of phenomenal concept and not open to neutral explication; phenomenal concepts involve the ability to re-identify and perhaps to imagine a feeling of a certain type, for example, a feeling like *this*;

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- **Phenomenal States (RECAP)**

- **7) transparency:** we can imagine cases in which someone is in the state S – that for me involves the quality Q – but denies to feel Q; this can be a problem of Q not being transparent for the other person: if it is the case, we open the way to unconscious experiences, and PCS fails as an account of conscious experiences; reply: there is no issue here (think about infants and bats: they lack phenomenal concepts, they cannot declare the transparency of their experiences; should we deny that they entertain phenomenal states?);
- **8) functionalism:** functionalism comes in two versions: 1) all concepts of mental states are functional concepts; 2) all mental properties are functional properties; accepting EP means rejecting 1; nothing however prevents phenomenal properties from being functional properties (given PCS and rejecting SMP); how can they be functional? two options on the table: a) common sense functional; b) psychofunctional; may 'seeing red' be captured in terms of some psychofunctional theory? There are arguments against it: 'inverted qualia' and 'absent qualia'; Loar does not find them convincing (inverted qualia are not clearly conceivable; for absent qualia, intuition counts against applying phenomenal concepts to things that are not single organisms – so the Chinese people's example is misleading);
- **9) incorrigibility:** physicalism, it may be said, cannot acknowledge the incorrigibility of phenomenal judgements of the form "if feels like that"; reply: 'the whole point' about the phenomenal is how it appears; there is no introspective guarantee of anything beyond mere appearance, even of discriminations of genuine repeatables (and, by the way, appearance does not guarantee incorrigibility);
- **10) sensation terms and phenomenal qualities:** objection: "Does it not follow from your account that, if no physical-functional properties are discriminated by our phenomenal conceptions, then there are no such states as pains, or sensations, or even consciousness?"; it does not follow, because, for example, 'pain' is not a phenomenal concept but a general category; it is rather what is common to all phenomenal manifestations of it (we feel types of pain and phenomenal experiences for which we have **no exact words**); the same goes for 'sensation'.