

# The Knowledge Argument Against Physicalism

---

# Jackson's *Knowledge Argument* (1)



*Mary is a brilliant scientist . . . forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She . . . acquires . . . all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky . . .*

*She discovers, for example, just which wavelength 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'.*

# Jackson's *Knowledge Argument* (2)

*What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a color 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 . . . her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. Ergo . . . physicalism is false.*



# Summarizing the Argument

---

1. Mary has all the physical knowledge concerning human color vision while in the black-and-white room.
2. But there is some knowledge about human color vision that she does not have in the black-and-white room, namely the knowledge about the subjective experience (**=qualia**) of what it feels like to see, say, red.
3. So, some knowledge is not physical knowledge.
4. If some knowledge is not physical, the claim that there is nothing beyond physical facts (physicalism) is false.