

We Are All Zombies: Does The Zombie Argument Disprove Physicalism?

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This paper seeks to defend the philosophical tenet of physicalism against the formidable zombie arguments articulated by David Chalmers and Saul Kripke. The viability of physicalism is ostensibly undermined if one entertains the conceivability and, by extension, the metaphysical possibility of philosophical zombies. This paper posits that the cogency of the zombie argument hinges entirely upon the conceptualization of qualia and its attendant properties, namely ineffability, intrinsicness, privacy, directness, and immediate access to consciousness. In the pursuit of dismantling the foundational premises of the zombie argument, this paper strategically leverages Daniel Dennett's insights encapsulated in the discourse on "Quine Qualia." Through a meticulous analysis and critique of the arguments surrounding the existence of qualia, this paper ventures to establish a philosophical impasse wherein both positive and negative contentions regarding qualia coexist without clear resolution. Consequently, the paper advances the proposition that the most parsimonious recourse lies in expunging qualia from one's ontological framework, thereby obviating the central tenet upon which the zombie argument rests. The ensuing sections of this paper delineate a structured argumentative trajectory, encompassing "Introduction," "The Zombie Argument," and "Arguments Against the Zombie," wherein each segment contributes cohesively to the overarching objective of fortifying physicalism against the purported challenges posed by the philosophical zombie scenario.

Introduction

The zombie argument appears to disprove physicalism at first glance. However, when taking a closer look and incorporating qualia and the properties of qualia, the zombie argument appears to be unsound. The classic objections to the zombie argument all fail. This paper will use the following approach to successfully defend the physicalist from the zombie argument: questioning whether qualia truly are intrinsic, private, direct, incorrigible, and infallible. By doing so, the previously inconspicuous possibility that we could all be zombies becomes extremely evident. Throughout this paper I will tackle the following questions: "Can we truly conceive of a world with zombies, and what does this mean for our understanding of consciousness?" and "Does qualia even exist?" This paper will address some of the ongoing debates relating to qualia, zombies and physicalism.

The Long-Drawn-Out Battle

The mind-body problem can simply be explained as the disagreement as to whether the mind is the same as the body or the brain, or if the mind and the brain are separate. Whether this mind is made of physical substances or immaterial unextended substances is an important debate within the mind-body problem. Physicalism posits that everything in this world is made of physical substances and therefore assumes that the mind is

all physical too¹. On the other hand, dualism posits the view that there are two types of substances: one of which makes the body and the world around us, the physical, and the other is the material that makes up the mind, the mental². The zombie argument is an attack on physicalism and attempts to show how certain mental qualities, such as consciousness, cannot be made of physical and material things. The zombie argument tries to end this debate by arguing the existence of the nonphysical nature of consciousness. This conclusion carries major implications not only in the philosophy of mind but also the wider philosophical tradition: metaphysics, ontology, epistemology and more.

Consciousness

Consciousness is often misunderstood. It can often be interpreted as a myriad of things, for example, alertness, mental processes, thoughts, emotions, perception, knowledge, and awokeness. All of these seem intuitively right due to the word's lexical and sometimes scientific use; however, within this paper, 'consciousness' refers to the subjective character of experience, or as Nagel puts it, the 'what is it likeness' of something³. An example of consciousness is the what-is-it-likeness of seeing red or feeling pain. Consciousness refers to the phenomenal experiences that we have. Another way to understand consciousness is by thinking of consciousness as a spectrum. On one

end of the spectrum, there are highly phenomenal states; on the opposite end, there are weakly phenomenal states. For example, the mental state of pain is highly phenomenal. There is a very distinct and potent what-is-it-likeness of feeling pain⁴.

Conversely, the mental state of belief falls on the weaker end, where there is a less distinct what-is-it-likeness of believing that something is the case. The phenomenal experience of belief is much less distinct and obvious than pain. Consciousness is the difference we can spot between the highly phenomenal and the weakly phenomenal. Qualia and consciousness refer to the same thing; they both refer to these phenomenal experiences.

Daniel Dennet provides relatively uncontroversial descriptors and properties of qualia: ineffability, intrinsicness, privacy, and directness⁵. To prevent any confusion, I will define the properties above. Ineffability refers to how no matter how succinctly, articulately, and eloquently one tries to communicate what one's qualia is, it will never be a fully encapsulating description. Intrinsicness refers to how the properties of qualia are irreducible and homogenous; they cannot be broken down into further components as they are atomic, and there are no substitutes for them. Privacy refers to how qualia cannot be shared and how interpersonal comparisons and communications cannot be fully and successfully made. Directness refers to how qualia are immediately and easily apprehensible and perceivable in consciousness. This directness allows us to be infallible about our own Qualia. Infallible in the sense that one cannot be wrong about their own qualia and can give an accurate account of their qualia.

The Zombie Argument

Kripke

The basis of the zombie argument can be found in Saul Kripke's Naming and Necessity, where Kripke argues against Type-Identity Theory and Functionalism. Type-Identity Theory is the theory that brain states are quantitatively identical to mental states; there is no causal relationship between the two as they are the same thing⁶. To create an easier picture, Superman and Clark Kent are the same person, so when I see Superman appear, Clark Kent logically would be there too. It is not a causal relationship that causes this result; rather, it is simply that they are identical. The common example used when it comes to the philosophy of mind is that the mental state of pain/experience of pain is quantitatively identical to the brain state of CF-fiber stimulation; when CF fiber stimulation occurs simultaneously, the mental state of pain occurs as they are identical.

Functionalist physicalism is an alternative to type identity theory. Functionalists believe that instead of identity, there is a causal relationship, this causal relationship being that there are sensory inputs and behavioral outputs. The functionalist believes that these inputs and outputs of functional states produce mental

states and consciousness⁷.

Kripke objects to these physicalist theories. He argues that when two things are identical to each other, such as $A = B$, their identity must be necessary if both A and B are rigid designators. A rigid designator is something that refers to the same thing or object in all logically possible worlds. An example of this would be your name. Think of your name. In all possible worlds, your name refers to the same person, which is you. Although, in other possible worlds, you may have a completely different profession, have completely different hobbies, and have completely different personality traits, the rigid designator of your name still refers to you in all possible worlds that you exist in.

In comparison, to give a clearer picture of a rigid designator, I will give an example of a non-rigid designator. A non-rigid designator, for example, is (the inventor of the bifocals) who in our world is Benjamin Franklin. However, in other possible worlds, this may not be the case. The inventor of the bifocals could be me, you, or anyone else, for that matter. Non-rigid designators refer to a description of properties of something within one world but refer to something else in some other world. Another example of a non-rigid designator is the descriptor of (the first president of the United States) which refers to George Washington in our world, but (the first president of the United States) can refer to anyone else in any other world. On the other hand, rigid designators are just by nature referring to the same thing within every possible world⁸.

Kripke continues by arguing via analogy, saying that molecular motion = heat, both of which are rigid designators and therefore, the identity statement is necessary. The same goes for Pain = CF-fiber stimulation. Pain must be a rigid designator as if something is experiencing pain, it very clearly and distinctly is experiencing pain; pain cannot be referring to anything other than the experience of it.

Similarly, CF-fibers must be a rigid designator, as they simply refer to a specific biological and physical mechanism. CF-fibers are not referring to any descriptors but rather refer to themselves. Since pain and CF-fibers are rigid designators, as Kripke argues, their identity must be necessary.

However, Kripke points out that there is a sense of contingency in the two examples of necessary identity shown above. It appears there are possible worlds in which their identity is false. There is a sense that heat can exist without molecular motion, and similarly, pain can exist without CF-fiber stimulation. They must be necessary for an identity to persist. As Kripke argues, there must be no worlds in which their identity is false, and if there are worlds in which their identity is false, then there can be no identity.

To disprove the inaccurate claim of heat not being identical to molecular motion, Kripke says that our intuitions are actually reliable and that we simply just misunderstand them. Kripke gives example 1 (E1) of a possible world in which there are creatures who can feel heat, but the phenomenon of heat is not

created via molecular motion and vice versa example 2 (E2) of a possible world in which there are creatures who are in the presence of molecular motion but do not feel heat. Kripke argues that in these cases, the rigid designator should be the heat sensation 'S' rather than molecular motion: so, in (E1), the creatures feel heat as they are experiencing sensation 'S', and in (E2), the creatures are not experiencing sensation 'S' and therefore not feeling heat even in the presence of molecular motion. Sensation 'S' here can be used as an intermediary to solve this conundrum. The necessary identity between heat and sensation 'S' can persist; our intuitions were correct, we just misunderstood them for being signs of contingency.

Conversely, Kripke compares this to pain and CF-fibers. It is possible to conceive of a creature that feels pain but does not have CF-fiber stimulation, just as it is equally possible to conceive of a creature that has CF-fiber stimulation but that does not feel pain. There is no intermediary for pain and CF-fiber stimulation, as there was within the heat and molecular motion example, that can be used in this case to solve the dilemma as pain in itself is the sensation, unlike heat which is not in itself always sensation 'S'. Kripke argues that this points to the obvious conclusion that pain and CF-fiber stimulation are not identical as the identity of (pain = CF-fiber stimulation) is not necessary, unlike (heat = molecular motion). Therefore, type-identity theory and physicalism fail. This creature which has CF-fiber stimulation but no mental state of pain or phenomenal experience of pain, is Kripke's zombie.

Kripke's zombie poses a lot of troublesome problems for the physicalist. For the type-identity theorist, it proves that pain = CF-fibers firing is a false identity, as although both pain and CF-fibers are rigid designators, their identity is contingent. For the functionalist and all other physicalist theories, it shows how it is possible for a creature to have on every physical level everything identical to a human, including their behavior but not have consciousness. Consciousness can be conceivably immaterial, as shown in Kripke's examples.

Kripke poses another argument, too. He gives the analogy of a deity creating the world. Would a deity need to make the identity of heat and molecular motion?

The answer is no. This is because they are the same, heat is the molecular motion of particles, and the molecular motion of particles is heat. This deity would only have to create the heat or only have to create molecular motion, and the other would arise as they are entirely identical. However, if the deity had created a physicalist world, then would he have to do extra work to make consciousness, or would consciousness already be present during the creation of a physical world? If the answer is yes, then the deity would have to take an extra step to forge consciousness, and that shows two things; firstly, that mental states cannot be identical to brain states as their identity is not necessary; secondly, that there is validity in thinking that there is actually more to consciousness than the physical as

consciousness does not simply arise or come from the creation of the physical world, unlike how heat arises from the creation of molecular motion.

Against Physicalism (Chalmers)

So, what exactly is a Zombie? No, a philosophical zombie is not the brain-eating virus-infected creature we see in Hollywood, but rather a zombie is a creature that is on a microscopic level physically identical in every way possible to conscious beings (Humans) but lacks qualia and consciousness entirely. Zombies can talk, act and function exactly the same as typical conscious beings. The only difference is that there is no 'what is it likeness' within a zombie. To give a clearer explanation, let me pose two examples: one with a typical human called Bob and the other with a zombie called Dob. Bob and Dob are both physically identical. When Bob and Dob are poked with a sharp object, both exhibit the same mannerisms, they both scream 'ouch', and they both try to avoid and move away from the sharp object. However, when Bob is poked, he experiences and feels the pain. Bob has the what-is-it-likeness of being poked by a sharp object and the what-is-it-likeness of feeling pain. Whereas, when Dob is poked, he does not have the what-is-it-likeness or the phenomenal experience of that pain⁹. Similarly, when Bob and Dob look at a painting, they both have the same verbal expression of their amazement towards the painting; Bob's experience, however, contains the sensation of what-is-it-like to see the painting, whilst Dob has no experience and once again lacks this what is it likeness of seeing. So how does this disprove physicalism?

P1: One can conceive of zombies.

P2: If one can conceive of zombies, then they are logically, nomologically, and metaphysically possible.

C1: Zombies are metaphysically possible.

P3: If zombies are metaphysically possible, then consciousness is nonphysical.

C2: Consciousness is nonphysical. By extension, physicalism is false.

Suppose one can logically think and conceive of an unconscious being that is physically identical to a human. In that case, that means that zombies are possible and that there is a world in which zombies exist and are contingent. This concludes that it is possible for the existence of a zombie. If one accepts that a zombie could logically exist, then one must also accept that consciousness is beyond the physical world. This is because if a zombie is physically identical to a human, then in a world where only physical substances exist, all properties of the zombie must be the same as the properties of a human (including qualia). However, we know this to be not true as zombies lack consciousness. There is a contradiction under a physicalist theory. The only way to avoid this contradiction is to come to the conclusion that consciousness is nonphysical, and if non-physical things exist, then physicalism must be false.

Chalmers and Kripke's arguments follow a very similar line of thought. Kripke's example is of a creature experiencing extreme CF-fibre stimulation and brain neural activity, which is identical to a human being but lacks the what-is-itlikeness of feeling pain or the conscious experience of pain. Chalmers' example of a zombie also talks about a creature who is physically identical to a human being but lacks the phenomenal aspect of the experience as it only perceives because it lacks consciousness. Chalmers and Kripke's zombies can be used interchangeably.

Arguments Against The Zombie Argumentn

Zombies are not Conceivable

The Zombie Argument:

P1: I can conceive of a philosophical zombie.

P2: Anything that I can conceive must be possible.

C1: Zombies must be possible.

The first way to rebut the zombie argument is to attack the first premise (P1). 'One can conceive of zombies.' One route of attack could be verificationism, a theory that argues that declarative sentences have no utility and are meaningless if they are unverified¹⁰. This would mean that no metaphysical claims can be made without physical and observable things. Under verificationism, (P1) does not have any physical and observable presence; therefore, it is unverified and thereby meaningless. This rebuttal is easy to deny as we can communicate and think about our phenomenal experiences. By positing this view when trying to rebut the zombie argument results in the fallacy of begging the question, a form of circular reasoning.

Another way to refute the possibility of zombies would be to look toward physicalist functionalism. A zombie is physically exactly the same as a human. So, therefore, from a functionalist point of view, a zombie would also have identical sensory inputs and behavioral outputs as a human. Therefore, a zombie would have the same functional states which cause mental states and, subsequently, consciousness. However, if a zombie has a consciousness that directly goes against the very definition of what a zombie is, there appears to be a logical fallacy when trying to conceive of a zombie under a functionalist theory. This means that under a functionalist theory, (P1) fails and subsequently, (P2) and (C1) fail.

This objection can also be refuted as functionalism is often seen as an unsatisfactory theory as it does not fully account for consciousness. This is shown in Ned Block's Chinese brain/nation thought experiment. The thought experiment gives the example that if we took the vast population of China and linked up the neurons of every single person exactly as how a neural network of a brain is wired and linked up, then under a functionalist theory, consciousness must arise from this 'Chinese brain'¹¹. We intuitively know this to be false. The conclusion that consciousness can arise from this 'Chinese Brain'

just seems absurd. It is clear from this thought experiment that functionalism fails to truly account for consciousness, or at least it does not provide a good physicalist explanation as to how consciousness can arise from mere functions. Because of this, it would make no sense to use it to attack the zombie argument, as the zombie argument itself crucially centers around consciousness, which functionalism fails to account for.

Zombies are not Possible

The term possibility is continuously used when talking about zombies, so it is crucial to clear up what possible means. Possible does not mean whether something exists or not but rather whether something is logically or nomologically possible in other worlds. Notice how the zombie argument, too, does not exactly rely on whether zombies exist; it rather centers around whether a zombie is possible in other worlds. The core question, then, is whether conceivability truly entails possibility.

An objection posed by Brain Loar argues that metaphysical possibility, even if true, does not provide any information or knowledge about the actual world we live in. There could be a possible and conceivable world in which consciousness is immaterial and nonphysical; however, that does not entail that our world is the same¹². Our world could just be simply all physical and material.

Chalmers proves this to be wrong as to posit a materialistic/physicalist view, one must argue that physical things or brain states necessitate consciousness. There is a necessary identity that physical things can necessitate consciousness; it is not a correlative relationship. However, suppose Loar tries to 'bite the bullet' and accept that zombies are conceivable and metaphysically possible in other worlds. In that case, that means that the physical or brain states do not necessarily necessitate consciousness but rather correlate with consciousness and are contingent. If that is true, then that means that Loar is no longer holding a physicalist view/perspective.

Zombies are, in fact, Conceivable and Possible

Joseph Levine sustains the conceivability and possibility of zombies. Levine argues that we as humans seek physical explanations of our world. He poses a similar argument to Kripke. Take, for example, the phenomenon of lightning. We choose not to believe anymore, unlike our ancestors, that lightning is God's wrath. Rather, it seems more comforting and satisfactory to say that lightning is the natural electric discharge in clouds. (Lightning = natural electric discharge in clouds), it seems impossible to conceive of a world in which this identity is not true, as Kripke would say their identity is necessary. Levine argues that we seek the same physical explanation for consciousness. Levine says that when examining the case of consciousness, we come across an explanatory gap. For example, if we again take the famous

example of (Pain = CF-fiber stimulation), it appears we have a necessary identity. However, we can see that this is not the case when we argue by analogy. Think of the physical story of lighting. We can picture how friction within the clouds causes electric discharge, this charge is attracted to the opposite charge on the ground, causing lighting¹³. However, when we take the case of pain, a physical story is missing; there is no satisfactory physical explanation of what is going on. These CF-fibers could be causing any other sensation other than pain. There is no physical story to link the two, there is an 'explanatory gap' between consciousness and the physical. The relationship between the two is completely opaque. There is no physical explanation for consciousness as shown above, and therefore it is possible or at least conceivable for there to be a nonphysical explanation for consciousness.

Levine believes that the conceivability of zombies is 'the principal manifestation of the explanatory gap'. If there is no physical story or explanation of consciousness, then there appears to be something nonphysical (excluded by objective science) about consciousness, and because of this, we cannot rule out the conceivability and possibility of zombies, (P1) and (P2) are true, and so (C1) must be true too. Whilst, I acknowledge that it is possible that a physical explanation of consciousness could be found there is no such explanation in the status quo.

Qualia

Pro-qualia (1)

The proponent of the zombie argument must believe that qualia are real, as the zombie argument relies on this.

One positive reason for the belief in qualia is this: take the example of an apple. Two things could be occurring when I think there is an apple in front of me.

On the one hand, I could be seeing a real apple. On the other hand, I could be seeing a fake apple. What a fake apple is, is simply anything that I perceive which makes me experience seeing an apple, but what is in front of me is not truly an apple. This includes hallucinations, illusions, or simply misinterpreting the thing that I am seeing. So, when I think there is an apple in front of me, at that moment, there is actually no way to know or identify whether what I am seeing is a real apple or not.

So, when I think I see an apple, I can be mistaken about whether there is an apple, as shown above; however, I cannot be mistaken about the fact that it looks like there's an apple to me. The thing that I cannot be mistaken about must not be the apple because I can be mistaken about the apple. So the thing I cannot be mistaken about must instead be something else. That something else and what something 'looks like to me' is qualia. For this positive argument for qualia to work, it must follow the condition that qualia are infallible.

P1: I can be mistaken about whether there is an apple.

P2: I cannot be mistaken about the fact that it 'looks like' there's an apple.

P3: The thing that I cannot be mistaken about must not be the apple (because I can be mistaken about the apple) but must instead be something else.

P4: I cannot be mistaken about 'the something else' so that something else must be the way the apple 'looks like' to me.

C1: 'The way that thing looks like' is qualia, and so we are infallible about our own qualia.

Anti-qualia (1)

Dennet provides this thought experiment: two coffee tasters, Chase and Sanborn. Chase and Sanborn have been professional coffee tasters for ten years. For the past ten years, their job has been to taste the coffee and ensure that the taste stays the same and constant. To Chase, the coffee taste has never changed, and the coffee tastes exactly as it did ten years ago, but he states that his tastes and preferences have changed, and he no longer likes coffee. On the other hand,

Sanborn states that his tastes and preferences have not changed; instead, his taste buds and receptors have changed, which is why he believes that the coffee tastes bad¹⁴.

Both Chase and Sanborn had previously liked the taste of the coffee, but now they do not. The coffee has stayed the same, and both Chase and Sanborn are comparing their current qualia to their memories of the coffee ten years ago. Who is wrong? Chase or Sanborn?

1. Chase could be right and have the same qualia but different tastes and preferences.
2. Chase could also be wrong as he could have different qualia but the same reactions.
3. Chase could also be partially right and wrong as both (1) and (2) could have occurred.
4. Sanborn could also be right and that his qualia may have changed or shifted.
5. Sanborn could also be wrong, as his tastes and preferences could have changed without his awareness. Sanborn could be misremembering his past.
6. Sanborn could also be partially right and wrong as both (3) and (4) could have occurred.

There seems to be a vast number of possibilities as to what could have occurred. As shown in the examples above, there could be six accounts of what had happened. It is unreasonable to trust the accounts of Chase and Sanborn as to what occurred, which resulted in the change of their perceptions of the coffee taste, solely on what they say.

If we are truly infallible about our own qualia, then neither of them could be possibly wrong about the nature of their qualia: Chase or Sanborn should be able to give a true infallible account of what has happened that led to the change in the taste of coffee simply via introspection; however, as shown by the 6 cases above there is no way to distinguish which case is the correct one. One or even both of them could be wrong and fallible. This shows and leads to the conclusion that we are not infallible in our own qualia. Whilst this does not negate the existence of qualia it does negate the “infallible” characteristic of qualia.

Anti-qualia (2)

The zombie argument itself also backs the claim that we are fallible about our own qualia. Take two examples. I am a conscious being, and I am not a zombie. If you were to ask me if I have qualia, I would believe that to be true and respond by saying, “Yes, I do have qualia.” Similarly, if you took my zombie counterpart, my zombie twin, and asked if it had qualia, it would believe itself to have qualia and respond by saying, “Yes, I do have qualia.” My zombie twin would not have qualia; it would be mistaken about its qualia. Furthermore, I could be a zombie too, and if I were a zombie, I would lack qualia. I would still believe that I have qualia, but that would mean that I am mistaken about my own qualia. It is clear from these examples that I am fallible about my own qualia.

Confusion

We are left now in a state of confusion and discomfort. On the one hand, we have an apparently good argument for believing in qualia. On the other hand, we also have a good argument presented by Dennet and enforced by the zombie argument for disbelieving in qualia.

Pro-qualia (2)

The first thought you may jump to in order to escape this conundrum is to present another pro-qualia argument; however, that does not solve the problem. For example, another pro-qualia argument is the thought experiment of a neurosurgeon who has rewired a subject’s brain to see inverted colors. The subject, instead of seeing grass as being green, sees the grass as being red. Furthermore, the subject, instead of seeing the sky as blue, sees the sky as being yellow, and so on. If only the subject notices a shift in color and no one else other than the subject sees a difference between their past and present experiences, then there must have been a shift in qualia within the subject. This supposedly proves that qualia are private as only I can know this change or this shift in qualia and no one else.

Shown as:

P1: Any conscious being has direct and private access to conscious properties.

P2: If a subject notices a shift in colors (i.e., seeing grass that is typically green as red), then that would lead to the conclusion that there has been a shift in qualia of an inversion of qualia.

P3: The subject of the neurosurgeon’s experiment is experiencing a shift in colors (i.e., the subject sees grass as red).

C1: There must have been a shift in qualia within the subject of the neurosurgeon’s experiment.

P4: Only the subject of the neurosurgeon’s experiment can know notice or tell if there has been a shift in color and a shift in qualia.

P5: I nor anyone else can notice and be sure that the subject of the neurosurgeon’s experiment has had a shift in color and qualia.

C2: Qualia must exist and must be private.

Anti-qualia (3)

The issue with this argument, Dennet says, is that the surgeon could have done two things.

The surgeon could have inverted the neural connections of the subject’s optic nerve, causing the subject to see inverted colors. Or the surgeon could have not tampered with the subject’s visual system but rather inverted the colors within the subject’s memory, so when the subject compares their past experiences of color and to their current experiences of color there appears to be something different, which the subject could interpret as an inversion in colors.

Because there are two possible ways in which inversion of color can occur, it is impossible to tell via introspection as to which scenario has occurred. Qualia, therefore, is not private, and one does not have direct and immediate access to their own qualia. It may appear that I have inverted qualia, but that may also not be the case; it could simply just be that I have an inverted memory¹⁴. Upon introspection, I do not have clear, distinct, direct, and incorrigible access to my qualia. Therefore, qualia are not private.

What Are We To Make Of This?

Once again, we are left with strong arguments from both the pro-qualia and antiqualia sides. What are we to make of this? One can argue that there is actually no reason to believe in qualia. There are so many conflicting conclusions and contradictions that it seems unnecessary to include them in our ontology.

It is perfectly reasonable to say that if we want to accept qualia as being real, then we must involve qualia in our ontology. Since we are incorporating qualia into our ontology, it should be expected for qualia to have constant, stable properties. (A means by which to identify what qualia is.) According to most proponents of qualia, as said previously, qualia are seen to have the stable properties of ineffability, intrinsicness, privacy, directness, and immediate access to consciousness. Those

on the Pro-qualia side support their arguments and claims for qualia's existence using these supposed characteristics of qualia. However, these stable properties are challenged by Dennet's thought experiments, namely the properties of privacy and infallibility. It is unreasonable to suppose that qualia are things we should include and incorporate into our ontology, as qualia do not have stable and constant properties or a means to identify them. The pro-qualia side, however, can simply deny all of this and infinitely attribute new properties by which to identify qualia. The anti-qualia side can infinitely disprove these traits and properties.

We reach a stalemate, an infinite regress of sorts. It becomes increasingly obvious that the best way to clear up this confusion is to simply not include qualia in our ontology or in our answers to the mind-body problem and consciousness. If we accept qualia's existence, we must keep posing new positive arguments for qualia that will become increasingly complicated and unsatisfactory (Occam's Razor). If we choose to prove or disprove qualia, then we are back to a stalemate and left with a sense of dissatisfaction. But if we choose to ignore qualia and not include it in our ontology, then we avoid all this dissatisfaction and confusion.

If we ignore qualia and choose to not include it into our ontology, then the zombie argument becomes unsound. This is because if we choose to reject qualia, then there is no reason to not believe that I am a zombie, and if I am a zombie, then a physicalist account of the world, including a physical mind and physical consciousness, does in fact account for everything. Physicalism therefore does not fail, and it appears that there are many problems for the dualist, the proponents of qualia, and the zombie argument. It is important to acknowledge that this is not a conclusive answer to the zombie argument for the physicalist. There may still be developments be it even in science that continue to inform this debate. However, at least in the status quo, it can be concluded that the zombie argument does not definitively disprove physicalism.

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