52.0 The Main Point

Churchland thinks that Jackson is persisting in an equivocation on “knows about”.
The argument is that premise (2) is plausible only if “knows about” means “knows by
acquaintance.” And premise (1) is plausible only if “knows about” means “knows that”.
The basic argument (and it is not a very good one) is that there is a completely consistent
physical model of color perception, “in which both of Jackson’s premises are true under
the appropriate interpretation. They can hardly entail a conclusion, then, that is inconsistent
with physicalism.” Therefore, the argument is invalid.

NOTE: this tactic is simply to deny the argument. This is as if you say “It is sunny”, and I
say “but if it were sunny, your shoes wouldn’t be wet. Your shoes are wet, therefore it is
not sunny”. and you say “it is sunny”. Churchland appears to be arguing: “Physicalism is
true, therefore your argument is false.” When Jackson is arguing, “My argument is valid,
therefore physicalism is false.”

52.1 Other invalid instances

The idea is that give Mary a long, discursive letter on the properties of ectoplasm
(written by, perhaps, Descartes) She will know all there is to know about ectoplasm,
therefore, the argument works against dualism as well.

Jackson’s rejoinder (hypothetical): no, she wouldn’t.

52.2 Non-Equivocal Knowledge argument

Reform the argument with a form of knowledge.

Mark lacks one form of knowledge – she lacks a “proper configuration of synoptic
connections meeting the neurons in the appropriate area of her visual cortex. She
thus lacks an appropriately partitioned activation vector space across those neurons,
and therefore has no representation, at that time, of the full range of sensory coding
vectors that might someday come from the retina and the LGN. In other words, there
something physical about persons (their color sensations...) and there is some form
of knowledge (an antecedently partitioned prelinguistic taxonomy), such that Mary
lacks the form of knowledge of that aspect of persons.” (575)

NOTE: Mary lacks knowledge about other people’s mental lives. Mary knows
that other people have this representation that she lacks. What is it that Mary does
not know????? Churchland has failed to answer the question – the answer ‘there is
some form of knowledge...’ is not sufficient.