

Philosophy 190: David Lewis

Short Writing Assignment 8

Due Thurs., May 29.

Instructions

Note: this assignment is for students in Group IV *only* (see syllabus for a list of group assignments).

Please respond to the following question in two pages or less (double spaced). (Needless to say this should be your own original work.)

Consider definition M5 of Materialism, the one Lewis settles on as correct:

Among worlds where no natural properties are instantiated, no two differ without differing physically; any two such worlds that are exactly alike physically are duplicates. (“New Work,” p. 37)

Why, according to Lewis, are sparse real universals, or something like them, necessary to make this definition work? In particular: on the following page, Lewis mentions that physical theories “recognize only a limited range of natural properties.” Why not just define a “natural property” as one recognized by (the successful descendant of) our current physical theories?