

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge
Part IB: Metaphysics & Epistemology

Perception and mind-dependence

Reading List

* = essential reading: ** = advanced or difficult

1. The problem of perception

- *Hume, David *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (many editions), 12 'Of the Academic or Sceptical Philosophy'
- *Martin, M.G.F. (1995). 'Perception', *Philosophy 1: A Guide Through the Subject*, (ed.) A.C. Grayling, Oxford: OUP.
- *Valberg, J.J. (1992). 'The Puzzle of Experience', in Tim Crane (ed.) *The Contents of Experience* Oxford: OUP.

Further reading

- Smith, A.D. (2002) *The Problem of Perception*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, Introduction and chapter 1
- **Gendler, T. and Hawthorne, J. (eds.). (2006). *Perceptual Experience*, Oxford: OUP. Essays by Crane, Chalmers and Johnston.

2. Sense-data and qualia

- *Russell, B. (1912) *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP, Ch.1.
- *Ayer, A.J. (1940) 1940, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, London: Macmillan, Ch. 1.
- *F. Jackson, (1977) *Perception: A Representative Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [See esp. chapters 1-4.]
- Robinson, H. (1994) *Perception* London: Routledge. Chapters 1-3

Further reading

- Moore, G.E. (1958). 'Visual Sense-data' (1958), in R. J. Swartz (ed.) (1965) *Perceiving* (etc).
- Snowdon, P. (2007). 'G. E. Moore on Sense-data and Perception' *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics* (eds.) S. Nuccetelli and G. Seay, Oxford UP
- Jackson, F. (1975) 'On the Adverbial Analysis of Visual Experience' *Metaphilosophy*, 6.
- Tye, M. (1984) 'The Adverbial Approach to Visual Experience' *Philosophical Review*, 93.

3. Perception and intentionality

- *Armstrong, D.M. (1961) *Perception and the Physical World* London: RKP
- **Anscombe, G.E.M. (1965) 'The Intentionality of Sensation: a Grammatical Feature' in R. Butler (ed.) *Philosophical Analysis*, Second Series, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- *Harman, G. (1990) 'The Intrinsic Quality of Experience' in J. Tomberlin (ed.) *Philosophical Perspectives* 4 Atascadero: Ridgeview.

Further reading

- Pitcher, G. (1970) *A Theory of Perception*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, esp. Ch. 1.
- Burge, T. (1991) 'Vision and Intentional Content' in E. LePore and R. Van Gulick (eds.) *John Searle and his Critics* Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tye, M. (1995) *Ten Problems of Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

4. Disjunctivism

- *Byrne, A. and Logue, H. (2009) 'Introduction' to *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings* MIT Press.
- *Soteriou, M.J. (2009) 'The Disjunctive Theory of Perception' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/perception-disjunctive/>>

Further reading

- Hinton, J.M. (1973) *Experiences* Oxford: Clarendon Press. Selections in Byrne and Logue (2009).
- Snowdon, P.F. (1980-81) 'Perception, Vision and Causation' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 81, also in Byrne and Logue (2009).
- McDowell, J. (1982) 'Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 68, also in Byrne and Logue (2009).
- **Martin, M.G.F. (2006) 'The Transparency of Experience' *Mind and Language* 2002, and in Byrne and Logue (eds.) *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*

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Part IB: Metaphysics & Epistemology

Perception and mind-dependence

Lecture 1: The problem of perception

1. Perception: psychological epistemological, metaphysical/phenomenological questions

Psychology: what are the mechanisms of sense perception?

Epistemological questions: how can perception give us knowledge of the world? Does perception give us direct access to the external world?

Metaphysical/phenomenological questions: do the facts about perception show that reality is to any extent mind-dependent?

These lectures will argue that even if the epistemological questions were answered, there would still be a metaphysical question which would remain. This is the question raised by Hume in the first *Enquiry*. It is what some call the puzzle, or problem, or antinomy or paradox of perception (see Smith 2002, Valberg 1992).

2. Hume on scepticism about the senses

David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) 12: 'Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy' §118:

- (a) 'It seems evident, that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creation are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions.
- (b) 'It seems also evident, that, when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but representations of the other. This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it: our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it.
- (c) 'But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. **The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: it was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind.** These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent.'

3. Hume's argument

- (i) The table which we see seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it
- (ii) The real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration
- (iii) The table which we see \neq the real table (hidden premise)
- (iv) Therefore: the table which we see is nothing but an image

Two issues:

- (a) Why think this argument is valid? Why think the conclusion follows? Why don't we just say that there are two tables?
- (b) A crucial step in Hume's argument is in bold type in the quote above: the table we see seems to diminish, whereas the real table does not, therefore the table we see is an image. But why say the table seems to diminish?

Is there a better way of formulating Hume's argument?

4. The argument from illusion

Here is one way of developing Hume's argument (based on Smith 2002).

- (i) When someone has an illusion, it seems to them that the object of their experience has a property F
- (ii) When one experiences something as having a property F , then there is something which has this property
- (iii) According to the ordinary conception of perception, the objects of perception are external objects
- (iv) In the case of illusion, the external object is not F
- (v) So the real object is not identical to the object of experience
- (vi) So when someone has an illusion, they do not experience an external object
- (vii) So not all experience is experience of external objects.

Weak points: premise (ii) (this is what Robinson (1992) calls 'the Phenomenal Principle').
More generally, why think that this point about illusions generalizes to all experiences?

4. The argument from hallucination

A more powerful argument is the argument from hallucination, which is not Hume's argument.

- (i) It is possible for someone to have an experience—a hallucination—which is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception but where there is no mind-independent object being perceived.
- (ii) A genuine perception and the subjectively indistinguishable hallucination are experiences of essentially the same kind.
- (iii) Therefore the essence of the perception cannot depend on the objects being experienced, since essentially the same kind of experience can occur in the absence of the objects.
- (iv) Therefore the ordinary conception of perceptual experience—which treats experience as dependent on the mind-independent objects around us—cannot be correct.

What are the weak points of this argument?

Perception and mind-dependence

Lecture 2: Sense-Data

1. The argument from illusion

Last week's lecture introduced the argument from illusion:

- (i) When someone has an illusion, it seems to them that the object of their experience has a property F
- (ii) When one experiences something as having a property F , then there is something which has this property
- (iii) According to the ordinary conception of perception, the objects of perception are external objects
- (iv) In the case of illusion, the external object is not F
- (v) So the real object is not identical to the object of experience
- (vi) So when someone has an illusion, they do not experience an external object
- (vii) So not all experience is experience of external objects

This problem is supposed to be a paradox or antinomy: the conflict is between the conclusion of the argument from illusion and our ordinary conception of perception (the 'universal and primary opinion' of everyone, according to Hume). Our ordinary conception of perception can be called 'openness to the world' (in John McDowell's (1994) phrase). 'Openness to the world' can be understood in terms of two ideas: (A) the objects of perception are mind-independent; (B) in perception objects are 'present' in a way in which they are not in thought. The argument attacks (A).

First problem: why think that this point about illusions generalizes to all experiences? Why not say that in cases of illusion we are aware of something mind-dependent, but in veridical cases we are aware of mind-independent objects?

Second problem: premise (ii) is questionable. It is what Robinson (1994) calls 'the Phenomenal Principle': whenever it sensibly appears to a subject as if there is something F , then there is something F which so appears. Are there any good arguments or reasons for believing in the principle?

2. The argument from hallucination

A different (and stronger) argument is the argument from hallucination (which is not Hume's argument):

- (i) It is possible for someone to have an experience—a hallucination—which is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception but where there is no mind-independent object being perceived.
- (ii) A genuine perception and the subjectively indistinguishable hallucination are experiences of the same essential kind.
- (iii) Therefore the essence of the perception cannot depend on the mind-independent objects being experienced, since essentially the same kind of experience can occur in the absence of these objects.

To get to the conclusion that the external objects are not essential to any perception, we need to add the assumption:

- (iv) All perceptual experiences have objects
From which it follows that:

- (v) It is not essential to any perceptual experience that its object is mind-independent
But (iv) is equivalent to the Phenomenal Principle. So the argument really depends on this.

3. Sense data and a puzzle about the obvious

The traditional distinction is between three kinds of theory of perception: (1) *direct* (or 'naïve') *realism* which says that we perceive mind-independent objects directly or immediately; (2) *indirect realism* which says that we perceive mind-independent objects indirectly, only by perceiving something mind-dependent which we perceive directly; (3) *phenomenalism* which says that only mind-dependent objects are perceived.

Theories (2) and (3) are the theories which are often defended on the basis of the arguments from illusion and hallucination.

The term 'sense data' is normally used for the mind-dependent objects of experience that indirect realism and phenomenalism say are the immediate or direct objects of experience.

Sense data are controversial: they seem to be incompatible with a naturalistic view of the world and the principles by which they are distinguished are quite unclear.

Yet from the earliest days of sense-data theories, there has been disagreement about whether sense data should be controversial at all: 'Some people have claimed that they are unable to find such an object [as a sense-datum] and others have claimed that they do not understand how the existence of such an object can be doubted.' (G.A. Paul, 'Is There a Problem about Sense-Data?' 1936)

How can there be such a disagreement?

4. Kinds of sense-data: what are sense-data?

The answer lies in how the term 'sense data' (*sing.* 'sense datum') was originally introduced.

Literally, sense data are what is given to the senses. But what is given to the senses?

Here are some remarks from the founders of the sense-data tradition (these were not discussed in the lectures).

Russell says: 'Let us give the name 'sense-data' to the things that are immediately known in sensation: such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses and so on. We shall give the same 'sensation' to the experience of being immediately aware of these things. Thus whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation' (1912: 4)

We find a similar claim in Moore, from whom Russell took the term; he defines the term 'sense-data' by using an example of looking at a white envelope. He then claims that what are seen are patches of colour and shapes: 'These things: this patch of a whitish colour, and its size and shape I did actually see. And I propose to call these things, the colour and size and shape, sense-data, things given or presented to the senses.' (Moore 1910-11)

Patches of colour; shapes, sizes; these seem to be properties of ordinary material things. So is this what sense data are? In a 'A defence of common sense' (1925) Moore attempts to define them again in terms that should be so uncontroversial that 'there is no doubt at all that there are sense-data, in the sense in which I am now using that term'.

'In order to point out to the reader what sort of things I mean by sense-data, I need only ask him to look at his own right hand. If he does this he will be able to pick out something ... with regard to which he will see that ... it is a natural view to take that that thing is identical, not, indeed, with his whole right hand, but with that part of his surface which he is actually seeing, but will also (on a little reflection) be able to see that it is doubtful whether it can be identical with the part of the surface of his hand in question. Things of the sort (in a certain respect) of which this thing is, which he sees in looking at his hand, and with regard to which he can understand how some philosophers should have supposed it to be the part of the surface of his hand which he is seeing, while others have supposed that it can't be, are what I mean by 'sense-data'.'

What have philosophers agreed about? But what is the 'it' I am talking about when I say that others 'deny that it is the surface of one's hand'? The 'it' is what Moore means by sense-data: the *object of experience*, whatever it is.

H.H. Price's (*Perception* 1932) introduces the notion of sense-data in Moore's way:

'The term sense-datum is meant to be a neutral term ... The term is meant to stand for something whose existence is indubitable (however fleeting) something from which all theories of perception ought to start'

To illustrate what kind of things these are whose existence is indubitable, Price says:

'When I see a tomato there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is a tomato I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can doubt whether there is a material thing there at all... One thing however I cannot doubt: that there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches, and having a certain visual depth, and that this whole field of colour is presented to my consciousness... that something is red and round then and there I cannot doubt... that it now exists and that I am conscious of it—by me at least who am conscious of it this cannot possibly be doubted... This peculiar and ultimate manner of being present to consciousness is called being given, and that which is thus present is called a datum.' (1932).

Price and Moore are both arguing that perceptual experience is fundamentally relational: experience relates us to something which is given to us. (Another way to put it, in older terminology, is that experience has an 'act – object' structure.) This idea lies behind any plausibility the Phenomenal Principle may have.

Notice that a few pages after his definition of 'sense-data, Russell says: 'what the senses immediately tell us is not the truth about the object as it is apart from us, but only the truth about certain sense-data which, so far as we can see, depend upon the relations between us and the object. Thus what we directly see and feel is merely 'appearance' which believe to be a sign of some 'reality' beyond.' (1912: 6)

This is a further claim from what he originally says about sense data. But note that Russell says this only *after* he has run through a version of the argument from illusion.

So the solution to the puzzle about sense data (§2) is as follows:

- What the defenders of sense data think is obvious is that experience has a relational character, that experience involves being 'given' something. To this extent, they think that the existence of sense-data cannot be denied.
- But when the critics of sense-data say they cannot find sense-data in experience, they are questioning the existence of mind-independent objects of experience. The best way to argue for such objects comes from (i) the view of experience as relational plus (ii) the argument from hallucination.

Lecture 3: Adverbialism and intentionalism

1. Adverbialism

It can be denied that experience is fundamentally relational. One way to deny this is to adopt an *adverbial* analysis of experience. Instead of saying that someone experiences something blue (etc.), adverbialists say that they *experience bluely*. The idea is that someone can experience bluely even if there is nothing blue that they experience.

The adverbial theory can be taken in one of two ways: either (A) as a reductive analysis of the meaning of perception reports; or (B) as a picturesque way of describing the fact that experience is not relational, that it is just an intrinsic modification of the subject.

Taken in the first way, the theory is vulnerable to an objection of Frank Jackson's: the theory will analyse experiencing a blue square and a red triangle as *experiencing bluely and squarely and redly and triangularly*. But this is the same analysis as it will give of experiencing a red triangle and a blue square. (Note that the theory cannot introduce spatial concepts like 'in the same place as' since this reintroduces relations into the picture.) This is the 'many properties' objection.

This objection, however, does not touch (B), the mere idea that experience is not relational. This idea is the subject of this lecture.

2. The Phenomenal Principle and experience as relational

The phenomenal principle: if it sensorily appears to someone that something is F, then there is something F which so appears. Why believe this principle? We saw that the fundamental idea behind the sense-data theory of perception is that experience is relational: every experience is an experience of something, whether or not there is something in the mind-independent world which it is of. The arguments from illusion and hallucination are what make sense-data theorists say that the immediate objects of experience are sense-data conceived as non-material objects.

The adverbial theory is one attempt to deny that experience is relational. The theory could be taken as an *analysis* of sentences reporting experience ('perceiving bluely' etc.). Or it could just be taken as another way of saying that experience is not relational. Taken in this latter way, the idea is better developed in terms of the idea of *intentionality*.

3. Intentionality

Intentionality is a technical term for the 'aboutness' of mental states: the fact that some (maybe all) mental states are directed upon things in the world. The current use of the term derives from Franz Brentano (1838-1917), who said in his book *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) that *every* mental phenomenon exhibits what he called 'intentional inexistence': another word for the fact that they are directed on objects. ('Intexistence' means 'existence in ...' not 'nonexistence'.)

Some terminology: the intentional *object* of a state of mind is what that state of mind is directed on; the intentional *content* is how that state of mind represents the world to be. Intentional content is *propositional* when it is assessable as true or false. An intentional state with a propositional content is known as a *propositional attitude* (Russell's term).

Intentional objects can be of any ontological category; they can be indeterminate; and they need not exist. Since not all intentional objects exist (ie we can think or otherwise mentally represent objects that do not exist) then intentionality in general cannot be a relation to its objects, since relations can only relate what exists.

4. The intentional theory of perception

An intentional theory of perception says that perceptual experience is a form of intentionality. In other words, perception is a form of mental representation. One kind of theory that says this is the theory that perceptions are *beliefs* or *judgements*. (See the works cited by Armstrong and Pitcher on the reading list.) But since not all intentional states are beliefs or judgements, an intentional theory does not *have* to say that perceptual experiences are beliefs. Perceptual experience could be a *sui generis* kind of intentional state.

According to the intentional theory, perceptual experience has an intentional object (what is experienced) and it represents its object in a certain way (the content).

5. Why believe the intentional theory?

The basic reason is that (a) it accounts for the apparent relationality of experience, since intentionality is something which seems relational when it is not; (b) it therefore provides a solution to the problem of perception, since it shows how you can have an independent reason to reject the Phenomenal Principle, and how you can give a sensible reaction to the argument from hallucination.

Some philosophers have argued for an intentional theory by appealing to something called the *transparency of experience*: that when we reflect on experience, we encounter mind-independent objects and properties, and we do not encounter any intrinsic properties of experience. In my view, these arguments are unpersuasive for the reasons given in Crane, 'Is there a perceptual relation?'.

1. The intentional theory of perception

The intentional theory of perception says that perceptual experience (and therefore perception) is a form of intentionality, or the mind's direction upon its objects. Intentionality is also defined as 'mental representation'.

The main reason for believing in the intentional theory is that it provides us with a plausible independent resources to solve the problem of perception. For the problem of perception was that perceptual experience seems to be relational, but that if it were, hallucination and illusion would have to be relations to sense-data, conceived as non-material objects. And this is not a consequence most naturalistic philosophers will accept.

So perceptual experience should be treated as something which is only *apparently relational*: although experience relates us to the world, it is not part of the essential nature of experience that it does. But intentionality is precisely something which seems like a relation but is not essentially a relation. So we should treat perceptual experience as a form of intentionality. In particular, treating experience as intentional shows why the Phenomenal Principle fails (see lecture 1).

2. Veridicality

The intentional theory seems to deal well with illusion and hallucination, treating them simply as misrepresentation (though of course it does not explain how misrepresentation is possible). But how does it deal with *veridical* (i.e. correct) perception? A natural thing to say (adopted by many 'intentionalists' – e.g. Byrne, Tye) is that perception is a propositional attitude (ie it has a content that can be true or false), so a veridical perception is simply a perception with a true propositional content.

Grice's example of veridical hallucination ('The Causal Theory of Perception') shows that this cannot be right. Suppose someone was hallucinating a pig in front of them, as a result of the stimulation of the brain characteristic of hallucination, and then just by chance there happens to be a pig in front of them. The content of their experience would be true, but they would not be perceiving. So having an experience with a true propositional content does not suffice for perception.

This kind of case has given rise to discussions of the causal conditions for genuinely perceiving: to perceive is not simply to have an experience with a true content, but to have such an experience which was *caused in the right kind of way*. See David Lewis, 'Veridical Hallucination and Prosthetic Vision'. Note here that such 'causal theories of perception' take the notion of *experience* for granted, and use causation to explain *perception* (in the visual case, seeing).

3. Naïve realism and presence to the mind

Another response to this is to say that this shows that thinking of perception as *representational* or *intentional* is all wrong. We should return to the original idea of 'openness to the world' and think of veridical perception as a relation to the perceived world rather than a representation of it.

But what about hallucination? Remember that the argument from hallucination relied on the idea that the perceiver and the hallucinator are in the same state of mind, because the states of mind and subjectively indistinguishable or indiscriminable. If this is true, then it is not possible to say that the *state of mind* one is in when perceiving is a relation to the world, since it is the same state of mind one is in when hallucinating.

4. Disjunctivism

The assumption that a veridical perception and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination are the same fundamental state of mind is what is denied by the *disjunctivist theory of perceptual experience* (sometimes called *the disjunctivist theory of appearances*). The disjunctivist theory should be thought of as a way of defending naïve realism, by denying that subjectively indistinguishable mental states are states of the same kind.

The theory says that whenever it visually seems to someone that things are a certain way, then this is *either* because things are that way and they are seeing it, OR because it merely seems as if things are that way. (The 'OR' is what gives rise to the name.)

Sometimes the disjunctivist view is expressed as the claim that the perception and the hallucination have 'nothing in common'. But this cannot be right, because at the very

least what they have in common is that *the subject is in a state which is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception*. But the view cannot simply be that the perception does relate the subject to the environment and the hallucination does not, since any realist about perception (e.g. an intentionalist) can say that! So what is the disjunctivist theory, exactly?

What is essential to the view is the thesis that a genuine perception and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination are not mental events or states of the same fundamental mental kind. The two states are each by definition subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception. But this is not because of a common mental nature or 'mental essence' that they share ('mental essence' is my phrase, but it seems to express quite well this core claim of the disjunctivist view).

The fundamental mental kind to which the perception belongs to is: *relation to a mind-independent object* and the fundamental kind the hallucination belongs to is: *mere appearance of such a relation*. There is no more specific or substantial kind to which they both belong. (In McDowell's words, the experience is not a 'highest common factor' between the two.)

Note that the main aim of the disjunctive theory is not to refute skepticism but to solve the problem of perception deriving from Hume: the paradox that perception cannot be what it seems to be (see handout 1). This paradox or problem would arise even if one took a radical reliabilist approach to the problem of skepticism ('knowledge is just true belief caused by a reliable method'). Also, it's not obvious that disjunctivism would help against skepticism, since although it might insist that if your experience is genuinely a perception then it is a relation to the world (who would deny that?), it does not give us any way of telling from the inside that an experience is a perception as opposed to a hallucination. So we replace skepticism about the external world with skepticism about our own states of mind.

5. A problem for disjunctivism

The next question then for disjunctivism is how it should characterize the hallucinatory state.

As we noted, disjunctivism cannot say that the veridical perception of a pig has *nothing* in common with the subjectively indistinguishable hallucination of a pig. The two states of mind have at least this in common: they are both states of mind that are subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception of a pig.

What does 'subjectively indistinguishable' mean? It is very important to the disjunctivist that they do not explain subjective indistinguishability in terms of the *identity* of some mental qualities. For if they did this, then the two states would have a common mental essence which consists in the instantiation of these qualities.

The approach to this question developed by Martin is that we should think of hallucination simply in terms of indistinguishability (indiscriminability) understood in epistemic terms: i.e. that the hallucination is a state indistinguishable from a veridical perception, where state A is indistinguishable from state B when you cannot know, simply from reflection on your current subjective condition, whether you are in A or B. As Martin says, 'the essence of hallucination – what distinguishes hallucinations as a class from other mental states – lies in their being indistinguishable from veridical perceptions, not in some antecedently identifiable feature of the state.' (Martin 2004: 72)

A problem raised by Siegel (see reading list) is that this approach to indistinguishability makes it hard to see how creatures (like dogs, for example) who cannot reflect on (ie think about) their subjective condition, can be in states which are subjectively indistinguishable from other very different states. One response to this is to say that we can think of the dog's capacity to distinguish in terms of how it *would* think about its condition if it *were* able to. But it is not obvious what exactly this means. Recent debates about disjunctivism have focused on problems such as these.