

How Do You Know You Are Not A Zombie

by Fred Dretske

Introduction

- You know you are not a zombie
- Dretske asks how it is you know it.

Veridical Perception Page 1

- To discuss the problem Dretske tells us to first assume direct realism is true. Your awareness of objects is not mediated by “more direct awareness of mental particulars –e.g., sense-data, impressions, ideas.”
- So you are aware of the world not by being aware of representations of it and “It is the occurrence of (appropriately situated) representations in us, not our awareness of them, that makes us aware of the external object being represented.”
- So in vision we are aware of mind-independent objects that are not particulars. So the properties you are aware of are properties of these mind-independent particulars.
- Regardless of whether or not you are a zombie these objects will remain the same
- So both zombie and non-zombie experience the same world. The question is, “What is it about this world that tells you that, unlike a zombie, you experience it? What is it you are aware of that indicates you are aware of it?”

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- “Perceptual experiences carry information about what you are aware of but this is quite different from carrying the information that you are aware of it.”
- Content of experience Vs awareness of content.
- The question is not “about how we know, in the case of thought, what we are thinking. It is a question about how we know we are thinking it – a question about the attitudinal aspect of thought. It is a question about how one gets from what one thinks –that there is beer in the fridge – to a fact about oneself – that one thinks there is beer in the fridge.”
- “What makes us different from zombies are not the things (objects, fact, properties) we are aware of but our awareness of them, but this, our awareness of things, is not something we are, at least not in perceptual experience, aware of.”

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- Maybe what distinguishes us from zombies is the fact that we have a point of view. “There is a perspective we have on the world, a “boundary,” if you will, between things we see and things we don’t see.” Partition determines point of view.
- You are not aware of the point of view in the sense of being aware of an object. We all know we have a point of view “But awareness of the fact that you have point of view does not tell us how you know you have a point of view.”
- Or again “How do you know you see things when your eyes are open but not when your eyes are closed?”
- The point he is discussing is difference in awareness, that is when you open your eyes there is a difference, but it is not a difference in *what* you see.

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- So the reason that an object cannot tell you that you are seeing it is that “what you see when your eyes are open doesn’t depend on your seeing it.”
- Now Dretske distinguished between two kind of difference. The difference between:
(a) feeling (seeing, hearing, etc) x and
(b) not feeling (seeing, hearing, etc.) x
and the difference between
(c) feeling x (glass, say) and

- (d) feeling y (sandpaper, say)
- You can actually feel the difference between feeling glass and sandpaper but you cannot feel the difference between feeling glass and not feeling glass, this difference you are not aware of. “So if you know that there is, for you, a difference between feeling and not feeling things – and, therefore, that you, unlike a zombie, sometimes feel things – we still need an answer to how you know this.”
- The conclusion of this section is that “there is nothing we perceive that tells us we are conscious.” So this conclusion was reached via perceptual realism.
- Footnote 4 states that this question is what is it about conscious experiences that makes you aware that you having them.

2. Objects We are Necessarily Aware Of.

- Discusses non-veridical experiences.

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- So he is talking about things like illusory experiences, bodily sensations et. Zombies might exhibit the behaviour of something which is in pain, that is take aspirin, groan, hold its head etc, but they don't feel pain. Because we do, this is what distinguishes us from zombies.
- Dretske used to think this was a good argument. But he now just thinks that this only shows there are differences in what zombies and non-zombies are aware of but this does not tell us how we are aware of those things that zombies are not aware of.
- Discusses the idea that you can't have feeling without being aware of them.
- This is infuriating he says that we are necessarily aware of pains and itches. His point is “If awareness of x doesn't tell you that you are aware of x – as your awareness of trees and people doesn't (see S1) – awareness of x when x is something one is necessarily aware of isn't going to tell you either.” So being necessarily aware of an itch doesn't tell you that you are aware of x.

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- “What is it that tells you that what you feel in your tooth is something you feel in your tooth, something you are actually aware of, and not the sort of thing that can occur, without being felt, in the tooth of a zombie?”
- So he is looking at the idea that we know we are not zombies as there are things you are aware of that could not exist if you were a zombie. (pains itches etc)
- But there is nothing about the things you are aware of that tell you it is what it is.
- So protopain is pain minus awareness. Zombies may have protopain but they won't have pain.

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- Protopain is indistinguishable from pain, they both have the same properties. So “how do you know it is pain you feel and not merely protopain?”
- The distinction between protopain is meant to show the difference between “the act and the object of awareness” He now discusses representationalism which has this distinction at its core. “This theory regards pain (and other bodily sensations) as representations of bodily condition.”
- Pain = awareness of protopain. Protopain = bodily condition we “perceive”
- But “If there is nothing that distinguishes these objects of awareness, your pain from your protopain, except the associated (with pain) act of awareness, there is nothing you are aware of when you feel pain that tells you it is pain you feel and merely protopain.”
- Discusses the objection that pain is not an object of awareness rather it is more like the act of awareness.

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- So the idea is that being in pain is awareness of protopain. So awareness of pain is awareness of awareness of protopain. So the idea is that we know we are not a zombie as we are aware of our awareness of things.

Scotty Note.

I think this is something Lycan wants to say.

3. Awareness of Awerenesses

- So maybe awarenesses might do the trick. Ok so what distinguishes us from zombies is awareness but we know we are not zombies as we sometimes are aware of these awarenesses. "If this is so, then one way of knowing we are not zombies is such higher level, introspective, awareness of our own conscious experiences." So introspection is the answer to the question.

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- Introspection is the way in which we know we are having experiences.
- Dretske tries to clarify what this means. "The problem I have is, once again, not whether we know we are not zombies, but how we know it, how we become aware of this fact. What objects, and what properties of these objects, are we aware of that makes us aware of this fact."
- So is introspection like perception etc? Are we aware of internal experiences.
- "Knowledge (awareness) of external facts always depends on (perceptual) awareness of external objects and their revealing properties. Telling someone how we know a fact is telling them what objects, and what properties of these objects, we became aware of that revealed this fact to us."
- So introspection is meant to be that we "become aware of things, the fact that we are not zombies, by awareness of the very objects –our conscious experiences –that constitute consciousness."
- This he thinks is an inner-sense model of introspection.

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- Fact-awareness is reached via an inner-sense. "Your awareness of this fact is reached by some form of inner sense, by awareness internal (to you) objects." So Dretske is going to claim that if introspection really allows us become aware we are conscious via an inner sense then the advocate of this model must say what the "special objects" you are aware of.
- "I do not know about others, but I did not become aware of the fact that I have conscious experiences by an awareness of the conscious experiences themselves in the way I become aware of the fact that there is beer in the fridge by seeing the beer. I have beer bottle experiences but not experiences of beer bottle experiences. I think those who suppose they are introspectively aware of their own experiences are simply confusing a fact they are aware of – the fact, namely, that they have experiences – with objects they are not aware of – the experiences they have."
- So Dretske thinks that if you don't distinguish the fact you are aware of from the objects we are aware of you will be lead to believe that the awareness that we experience "things is an answer to question about how we know we experience them."

(I'm not sure about Lycan, but I am not mistaking the facts I am aware of from the objects that I am aware of.)

- Discusses Lycan now who doesn't think that knowledge of coming to be aware of beer bottles is different from coming to know that we have conscious experiences.

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- “Our inner sense does not reveal qualities of the objects (the experiences) being scanned.”
- So for Lycan “inner sense, if it makes us aware of facts about ourselves (e.g., that we have conscious experiences), does so without ever making us aware of the conscious experiences themselves.”
- Dretske’s problem is that this does not say how we know we have conscious experiences.
- Inner sense - “It doesn’t go beyond the label and provide, as perception (of external objects) provides, properties (our awareness of which reveal to us the facts we come to know about them), inner sense gives us no objects and, if we follow Lycan, no properties of these objects our awareness of which explains our knowledge (awareness) of facts about them. Unless an inner sense model of introspection specifies an object of awareness whose properties (like the properties of beer bottles) indicate the facts we come to know about, an inner sense model of introspection does not tell us how we know we have conscious experiences.”

(Is Dretske asking a question about awareness in the epistemological sense, that is not the experiences you are un-aware of.)