

HANDOUT

Introduction to Philosophy

True believers

1. What does it mean to say that someone is in a particular psychological state, for example, is in pain?
2. What do we mean when we say of someone that they believe something? Does your answer to this question have anything in common with your answer to the first question? NB Don't focus too much on what Dennett says at this stage – try to think what you may have said *before* reading Dennett's account.
3. Explain Dennett's account of what it is for someone to believe or desire something.
4. Why does Dennett think his view entails that psychological states can only be causes in an 'unspecific and unhelpful' way?
5. For Dennett, we can look at systems from the physical stance, the design stance or the intentional stance. Explain the difference between the three stances, and how they might lead us to different sorts of explanations. Use examples in your explanation.
6. For Dennett, do you think that it is possible that someone can be interpreted as believing that *p*, with all the relevant information about how they do or would behave in any relevant circumstances, and yet *not* actually believe that *p*? If not, why not? If so, explain how this could occur.
7. People have criticized Dennett's view by saying that it has the implication that beliefs and desires are not *real* on his view. Why might they say that?
8. How does Dennett's 'Real Patterns' attempt to derail this criticism, and does his attempt work?