

Study Exercises

Other Species of Mind

Robert Lurz claims the following:

“It is well known that the brains and nervous systems of many animals are very similar in structure and function to those of adult humans; and since the structure and function of human brains and nervous systems support phenomenal states, it is plausible to suppose that the brains and nervous systems of some animals support phenomenal states too. Moreover, many animals behave in ways that entitle us to attribute phenomenal states as opposed to nonphenomenal states to them. When my dog runs across the lawn in hot pursuit of the neighbor’s cat, for instance, it is implausible to account for his behavior in terms of his having a nonphenomenal visual experience. For such experiences... do not usually elicit purposeful and intelligent behavior. My dog’s behavior, however, is quite purposeful and intelligent: it is aimed at catching the neighbor’s cat, and it is appropriately modified in light of perceived changes in the environment. We seem to have, then, a good reason to believe that there is something that it is like for my dog to see the cat in the yard... Since many animals engage in purposeful and intelligent behaviors upon experiencing an object in the world, we have some reason to believe that their experiences are phenomenal as opposed to nonphenomenal” (Lurz, 2000).

How is Lurz’s view different from Carruthers’s view, theoretically and in practice?

What are the moral implications of Lurz’s view?

What are the moral implications of Carruthers’s view?