Lecture 1

1. Well, the second most important. The *really* most important thing we know about minds is that their states are often conscious. About this, here as elsewhere, I maintain a gloomy silence. Whereof there is nothing to be said . . . .

2. The notion of multiple realization belongs to metaphysics, and the notion of functional definition belongs to semantics (and/or the philosophy of science), and it is perfectly possible to believe in one—but not the other. I am myself inclined to doubt that there are functional definitions because I am inclined to doubt that there are *any* definitions (hardly). But I do think that many of the properties that figure in special science laws, and probably most of the properties that figure in psychological laws, are multiply realized; specifically that they are *not* constituted by microstructural 'hidden essences'.

   Not distinguishing the case for multiple realization from the case for functional definition has, I think, often lead to overestimating the importance of the latter both in the philosophy of psychology and in the philosophy of science at large. Some of Devitt's 1993 discussion in "A Defense of Meaning Localism" provides a case in point; as does some of Fodor's discussion in *Psychological Explanation* (1968).

3. Notice that this is true for Cummins whether the higher-level property is reduced or multiply realized. In the former case, it is
identified by its microstructure, in the latter case it is functionally defined. If the multiple realization of psychological states is assumed, the present problem is to understand how a creature’s having a property that is computationally (hence locally) constituted could be a sufficient condition for its being in a state that is functionally defined by its external relations.

4. Thus, it used to be argued in defense of the psycho-physical identity thesis that it solves the problem of mind/body interaction by not allowing the problem to arise; if mental states just are brain states, the question how they are correlated with brain states disappears.

5. This sort of situation is not without precedent in the philosophy of mind. It’s often argued, rightly in my view, that discovering the laws of brain/qualia correlation would not, in and of itself, solve the mind/body problem about consciousness. Barring an explanation of why the correlation is the way that it is, such laws would be surds; and only basic laws are allowed to be surds. (See Levine 1993.)

6. Twin cases are embarrassments for broad content psychology only if the intuitive plausibility of claiming that my Twin and I have the same intentional psychology is granted. I propose to grant it for the sake of the argument.

Lecture 2

1. The caveat is to rule out really crazy worlds that preserve our chemistry and our computational psychology but change more or less everything else, e.g., worlds where all the creatures computationally like us are brains in vats.

2. J. J. C. Smart (1962) got this right a long while back: “. . . even a color-blind person can reasonably assert that something is red, though of course he needs to use another human being, not just himself, as his ‘color meter’” (172).

3. More precisely, the strength of your preference for A over B should equal the strength of your conviction that you would prefer A to B if all the facts were in. Offered a bet on a fair coin, you shouldn’t prefer heads to tails; and you shouldn’t think it more
likely that you would prefer heads to tails if you knew which way
the coin will land.

4. For one example among many, see Fodor 1980, where this sort
of argument is pushed very hard. Ah well!

5. However, see Fodor 1978; Salmon 1986; Crimmins 1992 and oth-
ers. I’m afraid that the sort of view I’m about to expound can no
longer claim to be eccentric. Drat!

Lecture 3

1. I owe a special debt to Professor Gary Gates for making me see
that the putative inscrutability of reference is a more serious prob-
lem for informational semantics than I had supposed. I was slow
to learn, but he persevered.

Some of the ideas that my treatment depends on were anticipat-
ed in Gareth Evans’ 1975 paper “Identity and Predication.” I hope
he would approve of how I’ve worked them out. Anyhow, this
chapter is a sort of homage to Evans.

2. Frege cases involving names raise special problems; see appen-
dix A.

3. Unsurprisingly, time slices work in much the same way as
undetached spatial parts. Suppose, for reductio, a deviant ontol-
ogy according to which ‘rabbit’ means time slice of a rabbit and ‘rab-
bit’s ear’ means time slice of a rabbit’s ear. Notice that, in the normal
course, a rabbit and its ears are contemporaries, so a time slice that
includes the one generally also includes the other. But ‘rabbit’ and
‘rabbit’s ear’, unlike ‘time slice of a rabbit’ and ‘time slice of a rab-
bit’s ear’, are mutually exclusive. So the deviant ontology fails.

4. Well, almost duck soup. What the argument really shows is that
either ‘triangle’ doesn’t mean triangle part or ‘square’ doesn’t mean
square part or both. You need further argument to show that Ling
ought to pick the third disjunct. As things stand, it’s still open that
Inf means square by ‘square’ but triangle part by ‘triangle’ or vice
versa.

But here, I think, simplicity can legitimately be invoked.
Barring evidence to the contrary, one ought to prefer a theory that
attributes an ontology of things or an ontology of parts to one that attributes both. This is because, ceteris paribus, the best theory is one which posits the fewest kinds of things compatible with the data. This holds in the special case where the data are Inf’s behaviors and the theory’s posits are Inf’s ontological commitments.

5. This surely can’t be literally true; in linguistics there are always caveats and exceptions. All our present purposes require is that it’s close enough to true to ground a rational presumption: viz., that if, pretty generally, Inf accepts inferences from “A is such and such” and “A is so and so” to “A is such and such and so and so,” then “A” is unambiguous for Inf. If that presumption is rational, then there are grounds for choosing between Ling1’s ontology and Ling2’s, the inscrutability thesis to the contrary notwithstanding.

For what it’s worth, all the systematic counterexamples that I’ve heard so far involve sentences with demonstratives. Thus, Elizabeth Spelke suggests that ‘this is a square and a triangle’ can be OK if ‘is’ means something like ‘contains’ or ‘shows’ (as in: ‘this is a ketch and a sloop’ said of a sailing print). In similar spirit, Brendan Gillan points out that ‘those are squares and triangles’ can be true if some of them are triangles and some of them are squares and all of them are one or the other.

Accordingly, the test for referential ambiguity I’m proposing won’t work if determining which expressions of L are demonstratives requires previously determining what the expressions of L refer to. But I know of no reason to suppose that it does. That an expression is demonstrative presumably shows up in the truth values of tokens of the formulas that contain it (specifically, in the ways that truth values shift as a function of the context of utterance). And facts about truth values are supposed to be unequivocal for purposes of the present discussion.

6. Patently, this account assumes that Inf is not prepared to infer the conclusions he holds true from arbitrary premises; viz., that his inferential practice is not reconstructed by the truth functional ‘⇒’.

7. I remind the reader that all this talk of knowing and needing to know is mere façon de parler. The intended claim is that the semantics of sentence (and predicate) conjunction is metaphysically constituted by facts about which inferences L-speakers are disposed to draw.
8. It may be useful to repeat that CN is, by stipulation, a relation among (actual and possible) tokens of expressions. Thus, for example, (i) is to be read as requiring that Inf is prepared to infer a token of the sentence-conjoined type whenever he is prepared to accept a corresponding token of the "*" type... etc.

9. Hence, of course, any property metaphysically or conceptually identical to rabbithood.

Lecture 4

1. It's widely (but, I think, erroneously) supposed that this feature of informational semantics is jeopardized by the standard intuitions about Twins. See appendix B.

2. Lepore and Loewer (1987) have argued that this knowledge must be, as it were, substantive; in particular, that if knowing a natural language is knowing a truth theory, then knowing a truth theory for L can't just be knowing that its sentences satisfy the disquotational schema "'S' is true in L iff and only if S." The crux of their argument is that someone who knows only that disquotation holds would not be able to infer from what people utter in L to the corresponding facts about the nonlinguistic world. (E.g., from the fact that people keep producing tokens of 'it's raining' to the likelihood that it's raining.)

For reasons that are beside the present point, I'm disinclined to grant Lepore and Loewer the antecedent of their hypothetical; I don't think that knowing a natural language is plausibly identified with (or even that it requires) knowing a truth definition. But I do think that the spirit of their argument is right. In effect, what follows extends it to include one's epistemic relation to the truth-conditional content of one's own thoughts.

3. The biconditional is, in fact, much stronger than is plausible and also much stronger than the case I want to make requires. For example, "... will be caused to have the thought that P iff the probability that P is nonnegligibly higher than the probability that not P" would do. There are deep and important issues about when it is, and when it's not, worth the cost of causing oneself to believe
that P. Clearly, it often pays to do so even though the probability that P will be true if you are caused to believe it is a lot less than 1.

But it simplifies the exposition not to worry about that here.

4. Compare the Empiricist/Positivist analysis, according to which the canonical form of an experimental prediction is always "... and that will make it seem to me that ..." Notoriously, the vocabulary of seeming isn't rich enough to express the data base of science. But the vocabulary of believing must be; it's a truism that the data we have are among the things that we believe.

Appendix A

1. Type physicalism is, roughly, the doctrine that psychological kinds are identical to neurological kinds.

2. I think I first heard this sort of argument floated by Janet Levin about twenty-five years ago.

3. Including, N.B., transworld numerical identities at least across nearby worlds. This is the price that my story pays for access to the counterfactuals it requires. (A less extravagant metaphysics might well do for my purposes; for example, a metaphysics of counterparts. I guess I don't care much either way.)

Appendix B

1. I'm not meaning to pick on Davidson; much larger bullets are routinely swallowed whole. Thus, I've heard Ruth Millikan claim that it's sufficient to make Swampman's head contentless that he lacks an evolutionary history.

2. Entry to this game is, of course, restricted to informants whose intuitions about the original Swampman differ from Davidson's; viz., to informants whose intuition it is that Swampman₁ does have intentional states. (Anybody who thinks that Swampman₁ doesn't but Swampman₂ does is well advised to have his intuitions seen to.)