Thought
A Very Short Introduction

By Tim Bayne

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a debate about the conscious character of thought – some people claim that conscious thought has a distinctive phenomenological character, whereas other people deny that this is the case. What do you think?
- What is the Wason selection task? What does it tell us about the nature of thought?
- How useful is logic when it comes to constructing an account of how we should think?
- What is the point of Wittgenstein's beetle in the box argument? Do you agree with him about the nature of thought?
- 'If you take care of the syntax, the semantics will take care of itself.' (John Haugeland) What does this mean?
- What is Searle's Chinese room objection? Do you find it compelling? If not, where do you think it goes wrong?
- What is the Turing Test? Do you think that it is a good test for the presence of intelligence?
- What is the content-grounding problem? Do you have any ideas about how it could be solved?
- In general it seems to be easier to tell what you yourself are thinking that it is to tell what someone else is thinking? Are there any exceptions to this rule?
- What does the fact that children learn to count by counting their fingers teach us about the nature of thought?
- What are the distinctive features of mature human thought? What might explain these features?
- What is mental time travel? How might one resolve the debate about whether non-human animals are able to engage in mental time travel?
- What is the Whorfian conception of the relationship between thought and language? How plausible is it?
- What is the difference between monothematic and polythematic delusions? What are some of the challenges one faces in attempting to provide a rationalizing (or 'sense-making') explanation of monothematic and polythematic delusions?
- What is doxastic voluntarism? How plausible is it?
- What is Clifford's dictum? Should we accept it?
- Chapter 8 discusses three domains in which there might be limits to the scope of human thought. Can you think of any other domains in which human thought might be subject to similar limits?

Other books by this author

Bayne, T., Cleeremans, A. & Wilken, P. (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to Consciousness* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
Bayne, T. *The Unity of Consciousness* (Oxford University Press, 2012)
Bayne, T. & Montague, M. (eds.) *Cognitive Phenomenology* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
Bayne, T. & Fernández, J. (eds.) *Delusion and Self-Deception: Affective and Motivational Influences on Belief Formation* (Psychology Press, 2008)

Further Reading

Daniel Kahnemann's *Thinking Fast and Slow* provides a magisterial treatment of the relationship between intuitive (fast) and reflective (slow) thinking. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011)

One of the best introductions to the computational theory of the mind is Tim Crane's *The Mechanical Mind* (Routledge, 2003).

I Know What you are Thinking: Brain Imaging and Mental Privacy, edited by Sarah Edwards, Sarah Richmond & Geraint Rees contains a number of papers dedicated to the scientific, legal and ethical aspects of using brain-imaging technology to 'read minds' (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Andy Clark's *Natural-Born Cyborgs* (Oxford University Press, 2003) is a very engaging defence of the idea that thinking is a situated and embodied phenomenon.

Readers interested in research into cultural variation in modes of thought might consult either G.E.R. Lloyd's *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and Diversity of the Human Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2007) or Richard Nisbett's *The Geography of Thought*.

Readers with a particular interest in delusions might find Jennifer Radden's *On Delusion* (Routledge, 2010) a useful place to begin their reading.