



**INTRODUCTION TO
PHILOSOPHY**

PROFESSOR DUNCAN PRITCHARD

TOPIC 6

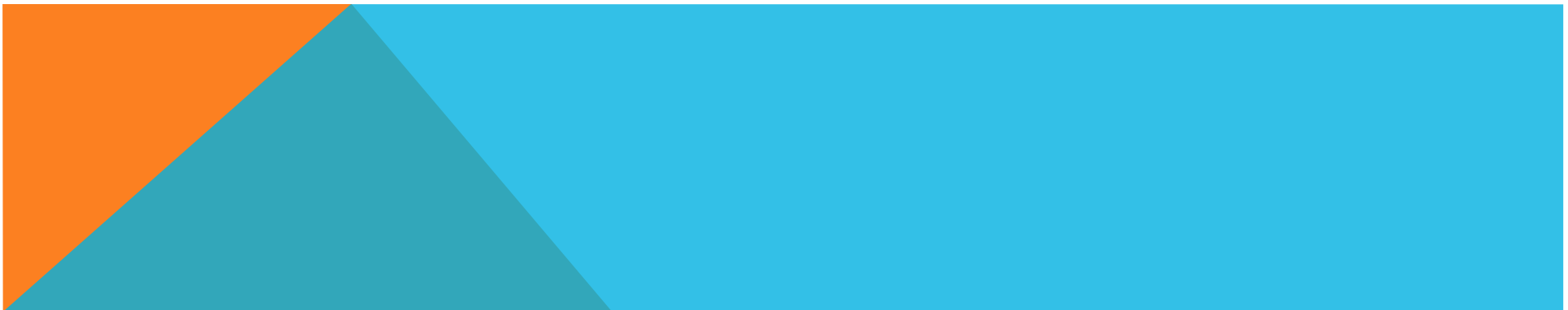
PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

- ❑ Philosophy of mind is one of the core areas of philosophy, and is concerned with such questions as the nature of the mind, how we know there are other minds, and the nature of consciousness.
- ❑ In this module we will focus on three central areas in the philosophy of mind: the problem of consciousness, the nature of perception, and emotions.



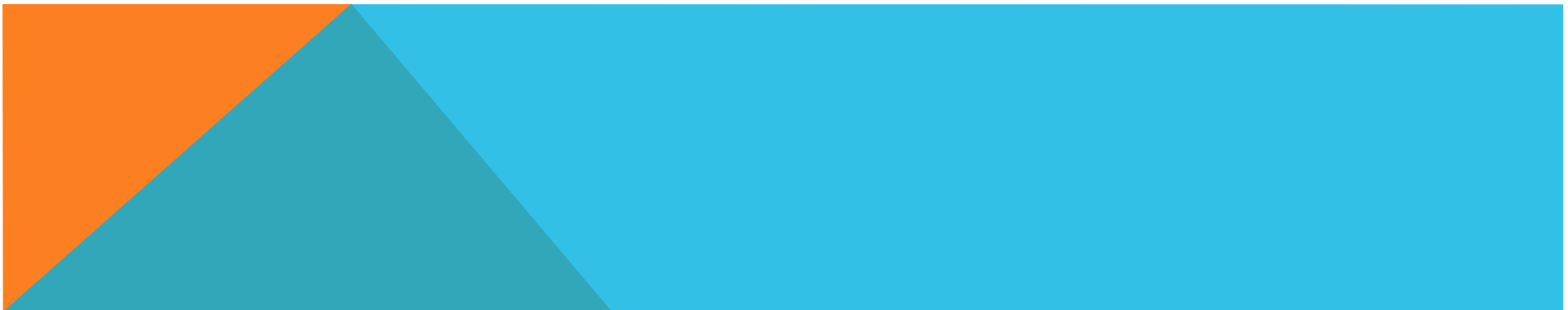
THE HARD PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- ❑ There is a 'what it is like' element to experience that seems core to consciousness. This is known as *phenomenal consciousness*, and it poses a problem for philosophers of mind.
- ❑ Phenomenal consciousness is philosophically puzzling because it is so subjective. Only the person having it seems to know what it is like to have it. In contrast, while we can capture lots of data about the neurological activity that underpins phenomenal consciousness, this doesn't seem to tell us very much about phenomenal consciousness itself.
- ❑ In particular, even if we can describe in complete detail what is going on at the neurological level, this doesn't seem to capture the nature of phenomenal consciousness.



A TAXONOMY OF VIEWS

- ❑ We need to distinguish between four kinds of proposal.
- ❑ *Physicalism* holds that the fundamental constituents of reality are physical entities. According to *reductionist physicalism*, once we know everything about the physical realm, then there is nothing else to know. Whatever consciousness is, it is thus exhausted by these facts about the physical realm.
- ❑ *Non-reductionist physicalism*, in contrast, while it shares with reductive physicalism the idea that the fundamental constituents of reality are physical entities, departs from reductive physicalism by contending that there is an *explanatory gap* between the mental and the physical realms. This is because although facts about the mental realm are grounded in, or *supervene* upon, facts about the physical realm (i.e., there is no *ontological gap*), one cannot directly infer the former from the latter.



A TAXONOMY OF VIEWS

- ❑ According to *dualism*, there are two fundamental types of substance in the world: the physical and the mental. The most famous proponent of dualism was Rene Descartes. On this view, the gap between the mental and the physical is thus both explanatory and ontological.
- ❑ One of the core problems facing dualism is to explain how these two entirely distinct substances are supposed to interact with each other. This is the problem of *mental causation*, since isn't all causation physical? If so, then it seems that mental properties are causally inert, a view known as *epiphenomenalism*. But what then for dualism?



Rene Descartes
(1596-1650)

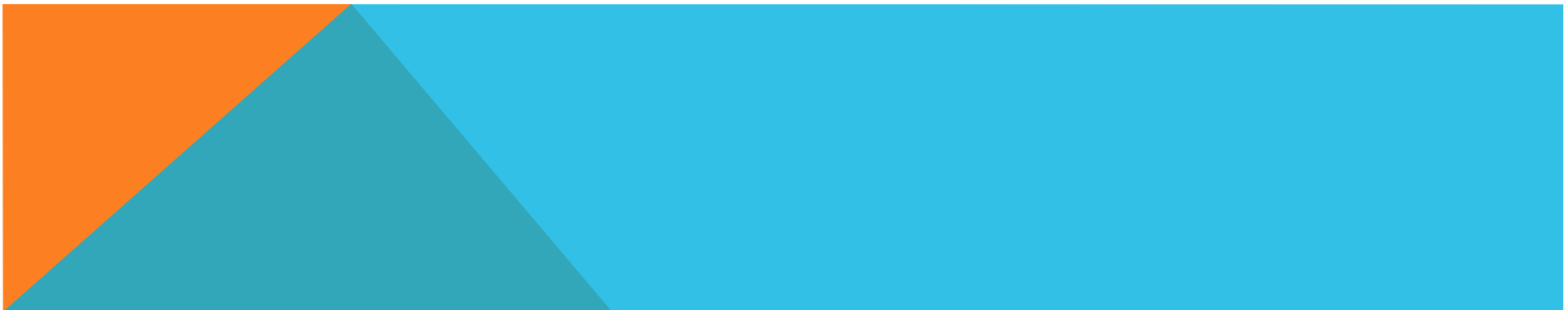


A TAXONOMY OF VIEWS

- ❑ According to *panpsychism*, everything is conscious, at least to a certain degree, even inanimate objects like rocks.
- ❑ This has both a monist and a dualist version, depending on whether it in addition holds that the mental properties of objects are ontologically distinct from its physical properties.



A Fellow Conscious
Being?

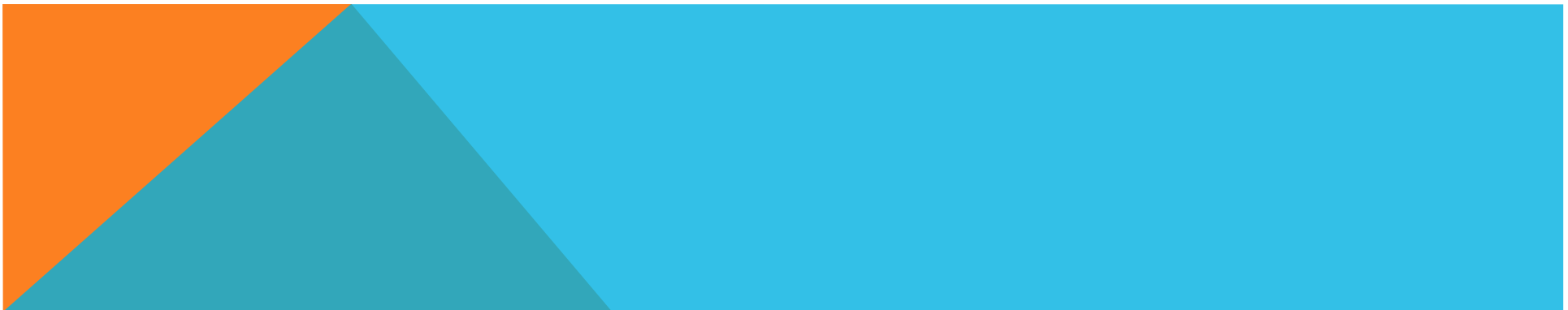


WHAT DOES MARY KNOW?

- ❑ Imagine a neuroscientist called Mary who is confined to a completely black-and-white environment, but who knows everything there is to know about colours and colour perception.
- ❑ Here is the question: when Mary leaves her black-and-white environment and experiences colour for the first time, does she come to know something new?
- ❑ If all the facts about colour are physical facts, then it would seem not, and yet it does seem intuitive that Mary comes to know, for the first time, what it is like to experience colours.
- ❑ Is this a knock-down argument against physicalism?

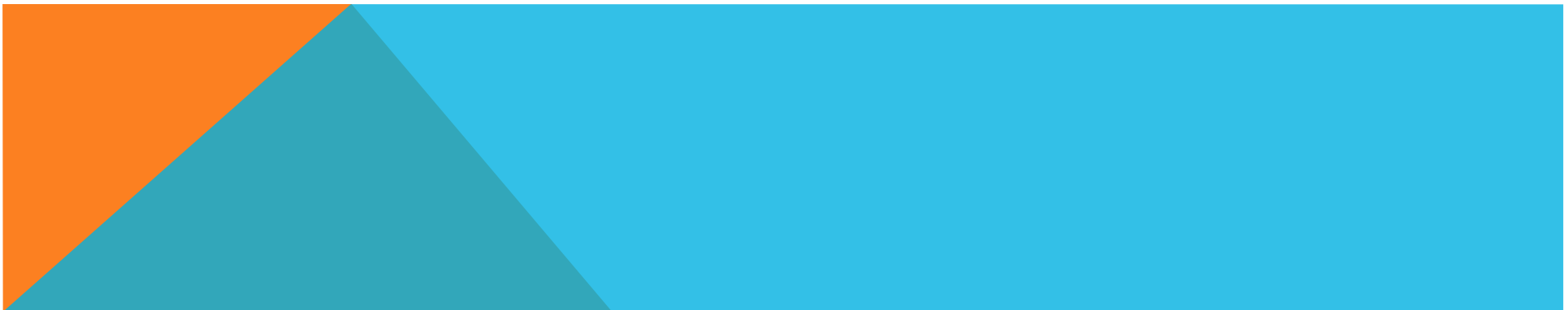


Frank Jackson
(b. 1943)



WHAT DOES MARY KNOW?

- ❑ There are various ways that the physicalist might respond to this problem. One could argue that what Mary comes to know are facts about the conscious experience of colour. Why can't these be facts about the physical realm?
- ❑ Another response is to point out that the argument is in any case at most a problem for reductionist physicalism, as non-reductionist physicalism never claimed that one could infer all the facts about the mental realm from facts about the physical realm.
- ❑ Another line of response is to say that while Mary doesn't learn any new facts when she leaves the black-and-white room, she does acquire some new abilities (e.g., the ability to see colour), or perhaps also some new concepts (e.g., the phenomenal concepts involved in seeing colours).



THE ZOMBIE ARGUMENT

- ❑ Despite the image used here, philosophical zombies are not like the zombies from the movies. This is because they are physically and functionally indistinguishable from us (and hence are not always trying to eat your brains). What is crucial to them is that even despite this fact they have no inner mental life.
- ❑ Here is the question: are philosophical zombies even possible? If so, then this seems to be a problem for physicalism, since philosophical zombies aren't conscious like us, but they are physically just like us.



Some (Non-Philosophical)
Zombies, Yesterday



THE ZOMBIE ARGUMENT

- ❑ One of the issues raised by the zombie argument is how it converts the conceivability of there being philosophical zombies into the genuine possibility of there being philosophical zombies (metaphysical possibility, as philosophers call it, which means, roughly, consistent with the metaphysical nature of reality).
- ❑ But is conceivability a guide to (metaphysical) possibility? This isn't at all obvious. It is conceivable that Duncan Pritchard wasn't born in Wolverhampton on Jan 30th 1974, but is this metaphysically possible? After all, one might plausibly hold that someone born on a different date can't possibly be the same person (i.e., it is arguable that it is a metaphysical necessity that I am born on the date that I am born).



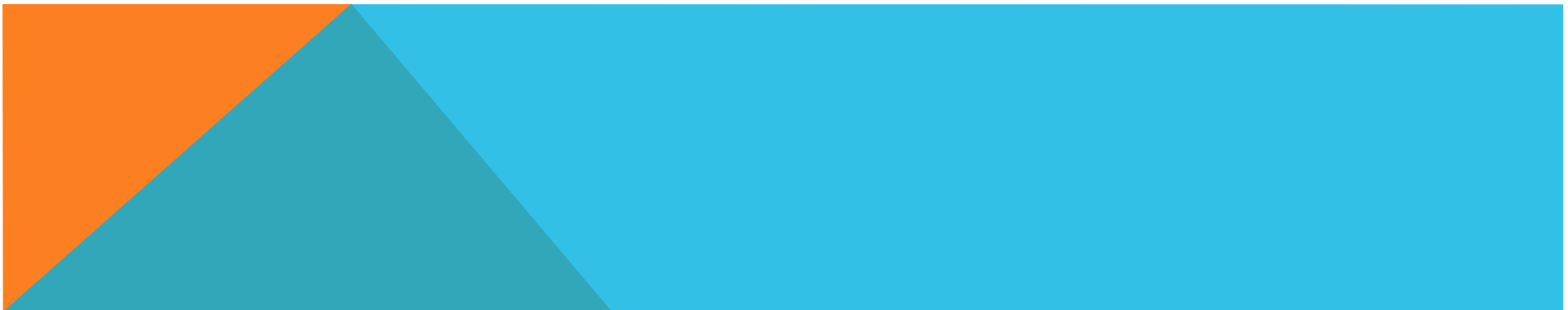
THE ZOMBIE ARGUMENT

- ❑ Another way to respond to the zombie argument on the part of physicalism is to go *functionalist*. According to functionalism, anything that is functionally identical to someone with consciousness is thereby just as conscious. So if the philosophical zombie really is functionally just like us in every respect, then they are conscious to just the same degree as we are.
- ❑ But isn't that just to flatly deny what seems to be the obvious point that philosophical zombies, while being functionally like us, are not conscious?



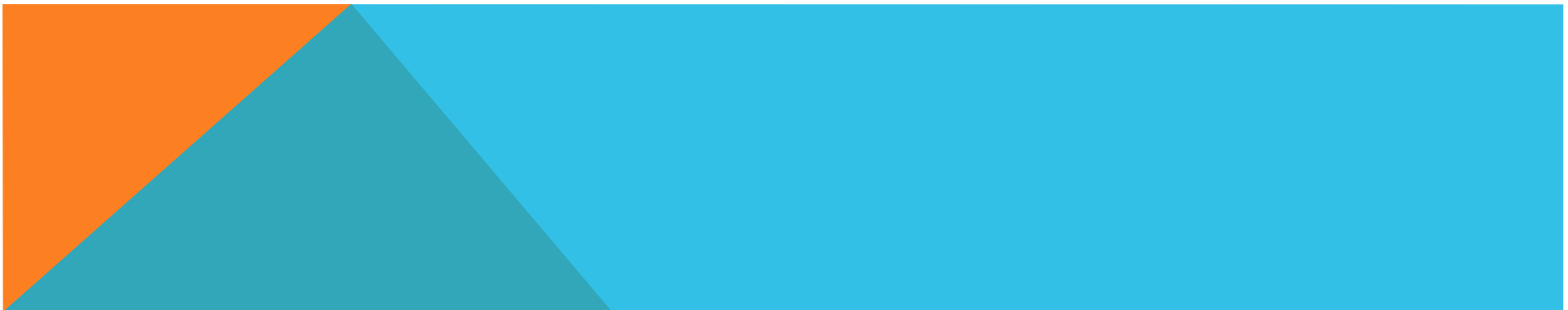
SENSORY EXPERIENCE

- ❑ Although philosophers tend to focus on visual perception, sensory perception comes in many forms: tactile, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, etc.
- ❑ Moreover, although we naturally tend to think of our sensory experiences as distinct in terms of their origin (i.e., which sense is involved), in fact the empirical data suggests that a lot of sensory experience is in fact multi-sensory.
- ❑ When sensory experience goes well it is said to be *veridical experience*, in that it does not involve any misperception, and hence is accurate. But things don't always go so well.
- ❑ An *illusory experience* is an experience that fails to be properly causally related to some of the properties of objects in the external world. Consider, for example, a mirage.
- ❑ Experience can also fail to be properly causally related to the external world altogether, for example, as a result of exposure to drugs, mental illness, brain damage or unusual external circumstances. When experience is not an immediate result of processing external stimuli, it is said to be an *hallucination*.



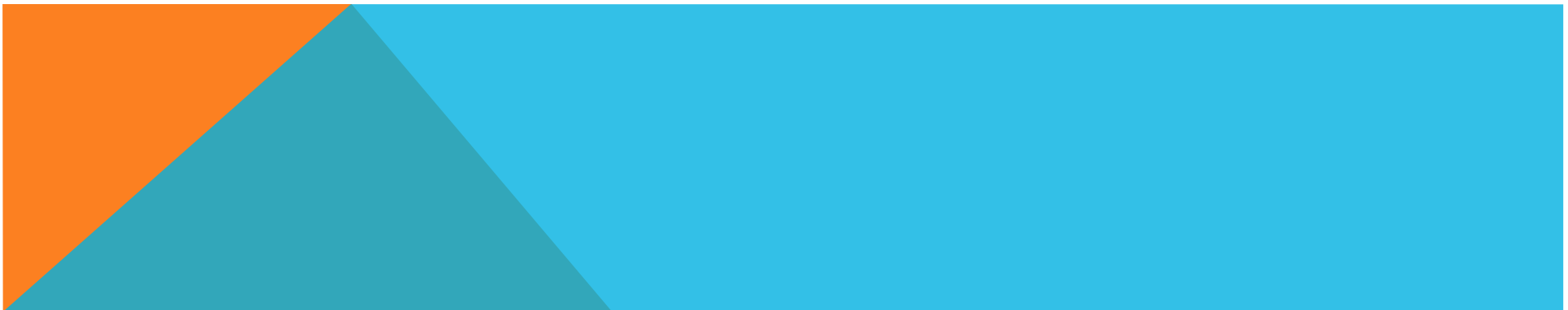
DIRECT REALISM VS INDIRECT REALISM

- ❑ *Direct realism* holds that, at least in veridical cases of perception, perceptual experience involves direct awareness of an external object and some of its properties.
- ❑ The two main forms of direct realism are *naive realism* and *direct representationalism*.
- ❑ Naive realists hold that perception just is a perceptual relation to an external object. It follows that, according to naive realism, hallucinations are not real perceptions but different types of mental states that can appear introspectively indistinguishable from veridical experiences (since, by definition, they do not put one in a perceptual relation to an external object).



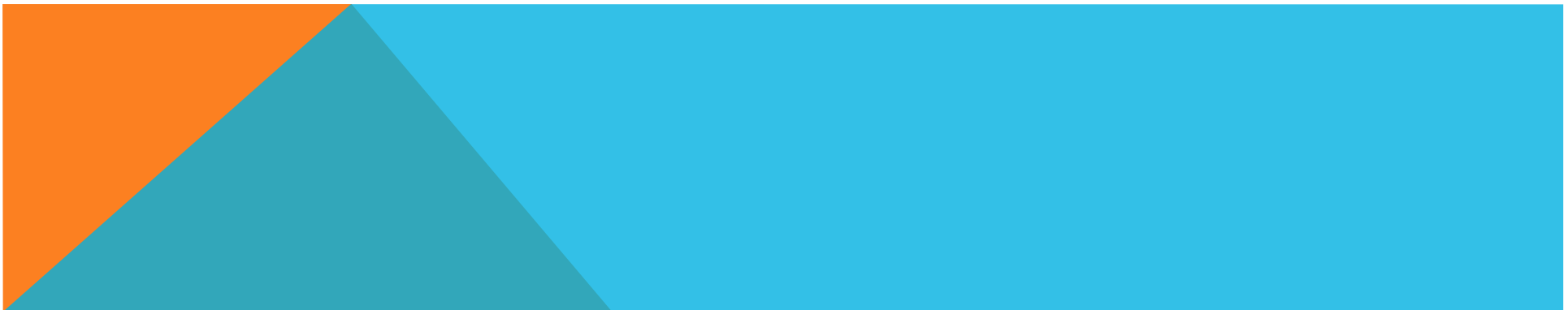
DIRECT REALISM VS INDIRECT REALISM

- ❑ According to direct representationalism, in contrast, what one is directly acquainted with in experience is not the external objects themselves but rather representational states.
- ❑ But once one goes down the road of representationalism it is common to abandon direct realism altogether and go for an indirect realism. For why think that the representational content in play in experience is directly related to the perceptual objects at issue?
- ❑ In particular, given that one's experiences in cases of deception are indistinguishable from ordinary life, why not suppose that the representational content is identical across both cases, and hence that it doesn't have anything essentially to do with whether that content is veridical. This would be to move to *indirect realism*.



THE ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION

- ❑ The main argument for indirect realism, and against direct realism, is the argument from illusion.
- ❑ No-one should deny that there can be illusory experiences which are indistinguishable from everyday life, such as the sceptical scenarios that we considered in an earlier module.
- ❑ But if the experiences are indistinguishable, then doesn't that entail that what one is really aware of is a representation of the world that is common to both the deceived and non-deceived case? If so, that implies that what one has direct experience of is not the world itself but rather some representation of the world, which could either be true or false.



DISJUNCTIVISM

- ❑ One influential response to the argument from illusion has been proposed by proponents of *disjunctivism*, such as John McDowell.
- ❑ On this view, we are not to assume that just because one's experience in the good case and the corresponding bad case are indistinguishable that it therefore follows that they are the same kind of experience. Rather, the nature of one's perceptual experience can be different across these cases, which is why the view is known as disjunctivism.
- ❑ In particular, according to disjunctivism there is no metaphysical common core to one's perceptual experience in good and bad cases, even though they share the epistemological property of being indistinguishable.



John McDowell (b. 1942)



AN ARGUMENT FOR INDIRECT REALISM

- ❑ Frank Jackson has offered the following argument for indirect realism:
 1. When our perceptual perspective changes, the thing we are directly perceptually aware of looks like it is changing.
 2. If something looks F, then there is an F of which one is directly perceptually aware.
 3. The external object does not change when our perceptual perspective changes.
 4. Conclusion: the thing we are directly perceptually aware of is not the external object.



Frank Jackson (b. 1943)



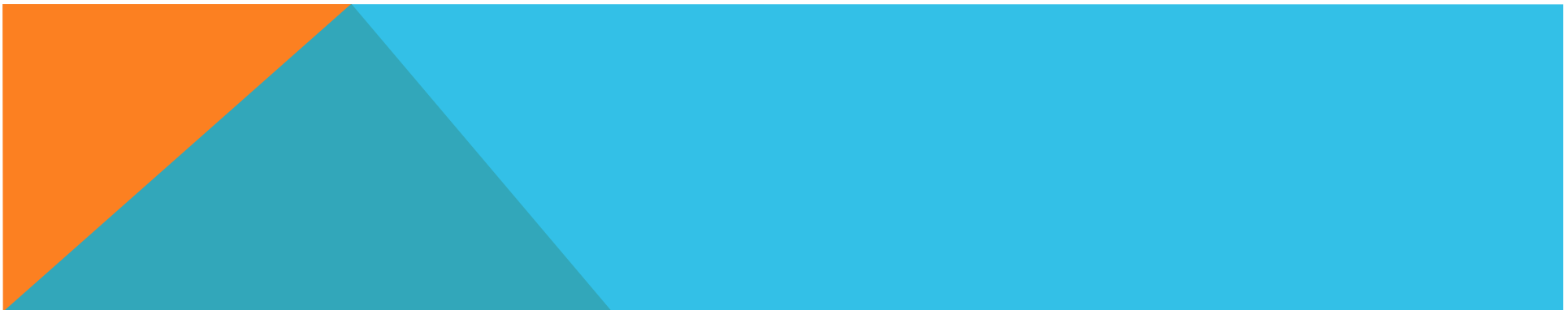
SENSE-DATA AND INDIRECT REALISM

- ❑ Jackson's argument expresses the way in which an appeal to *sense-data* can be used to motivate indirect realism.
- ❑ Sense-data are meant to be our subjective experience of the world, and hence are meant to be an experience that is common to both the good (veridical) and the corresponding (indistinguishable) bad (illusory) cases.
- ❑ It follows that it is not just that the one's experience are indistinguishable across the good and corresponding bad cases, but that the sense-data in play are also the same. Hence, what we are directly aware of cannot be the world itself (since what we are aware of in veridical experience we are also aware of in illusory experience).
- ❑ We thus get an argument for indirect realism, *contra* direct realism.



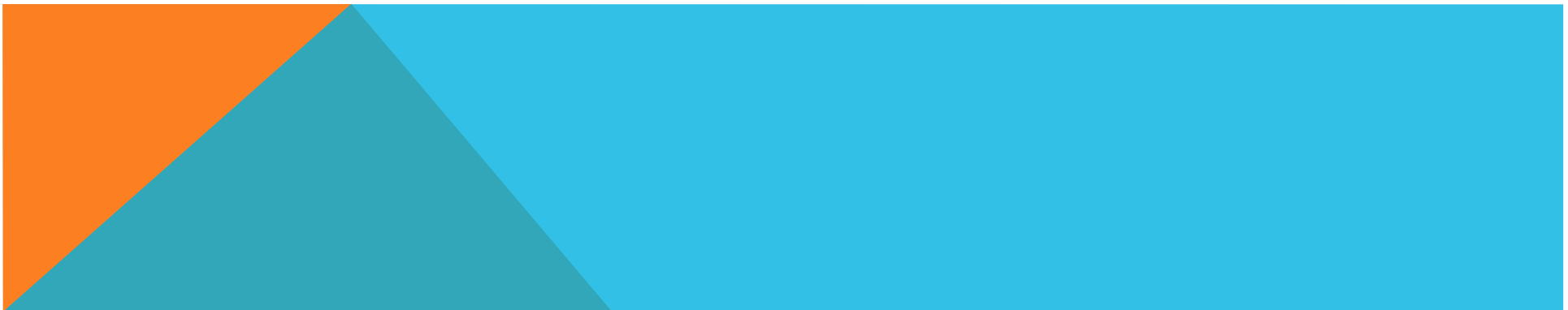
EMOTIONS

- ❑ General question: What role should emotions play in one's philosophy of mind?
- ❑ According to American psychologist Paul Ekman, we should distinguish between *basic emotions*, which are associated with universally recognizable facial expressions, and *complex emotions*, which are combinations of basic emotions.
- ❑ The basic emotions are joy, surprise, anger, sadness, fear and disgust.
- ❑ Jealousy, love, guilt, grief, and pride are examples of complex emotions. For example, contempt is a mixture of anger and disgust.



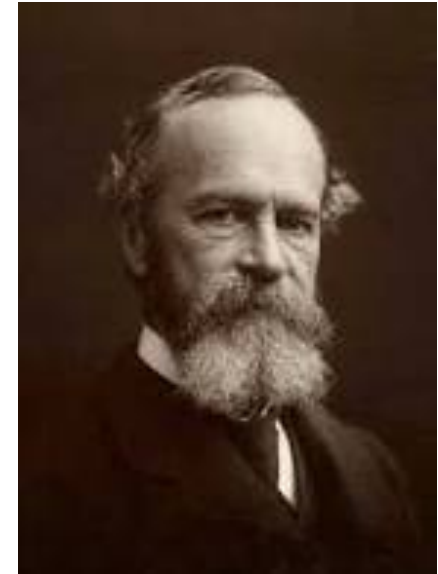
EMOTIONS

- ❑ The distinction between basic and complex emotions is rooted in *evolutionary psychology*, which argues that emotions are innate evolutionary adaptations (e.g., that jealousy serves an important evolutionary purpose, which is why men and women tend to be jealous in different ways).
- ❑ But proponents of *social constructionism*, in contrast, argue that emotions are often social constructed, which is why certain cultures develop distinctive kinds of emotion.

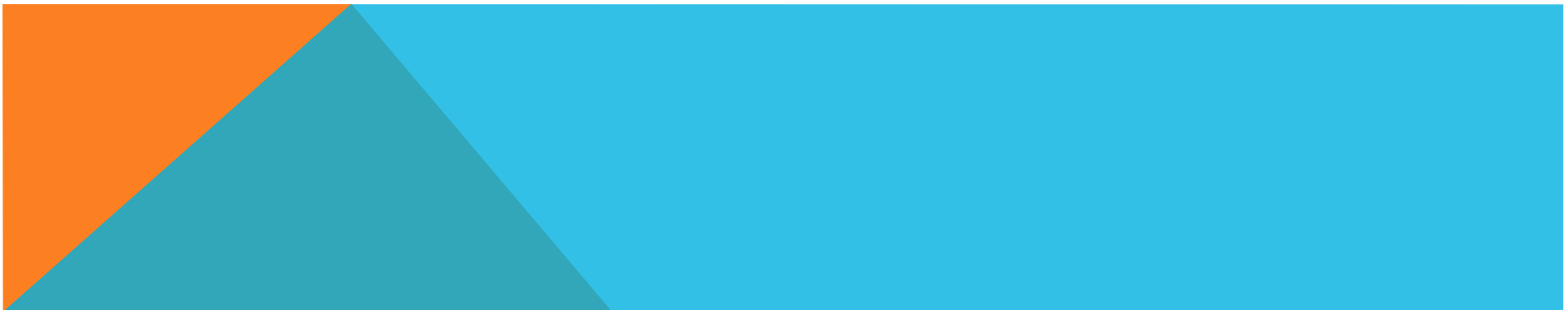


FEELING THEORIES OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ One of the most influential theories of the nature of emotions is the *James–Lange theory* (due to William James and Carl Lange). According to this theory, emotions are feelings of bodily changes.
- ❑ James famously stated that you are not crying because you are sad, but rather you are sad because you are crying. This is an informal gloss on the view, which James uses to emphasize that you don't need to have an emotion first and then a bodily reaction. Instead, the emotion is a feeling of a reaction in your body.
- ❑ For example, if you are afraid, that very emotion may consist in a feeling of your heart racing and your palms getting sweaty. The feeling itself should be understood as a kind of bodily experience of changes in the body's physiology.



William James
(1842-1910)



FEELING THEORIES OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ There are a number of problems with this ‘feeling’ theory of emotions. For one thing, emotions seem to be distinctive in being aimed at certain objects. I am sad about what happened, or angry at X because of what he did. How is this feature of emotions to be captured by the feeling theory?
- ❑ Another problem with the view is that one cannot always distinguish emotions in terms of bodily responses. Could not the very same bodily response represent two distinct emotions (e.g., as when anxiety and excitement both lead to one’s heart racing)?
- ❑ These problems suggests that the feeling theory must think of emotions as not just bodily sensations but also as experiences that are directed towards certain objects, where the two are appropriately related (i.e., to avoid it being merely a coincidence that the bodily sensation and the associated experience are both manifested).

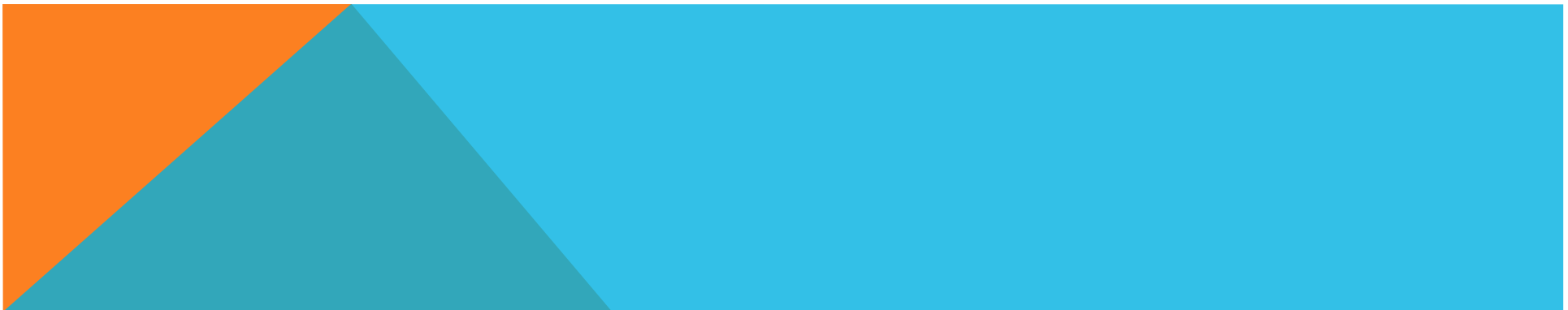


COGNITIVE THEORIES OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ One of the main competitor accounts of emotions to feeling views are *cognitive theories of emotion*.
- ❑ According to this proposal, emotions are cognitive judgments about, or assessments of, the external environment that involve a negative or positive valence.
- ❑ So, for example, one's emotion of fear when one boards a plane reflects one's assessment of the environment (i.e., that one is about to take off!) that it is dangerous.



Martha Nussbaum (b. 1947)



COGNITIVE VS FEELING THEORIES OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ One advantage of this view is that some emotions don't seem to essentially involve any bodily sensations (e.g., pride), *contra* feeling theories.
- ❑ But is this really true? Couldn't one argue that the bodily sensation is always there, but simply less accentuated in some cases of emotion (such as broadly 'intellectual' emotions like pride)?
- ❑ Another response might be to say that emotions are sometimes unconsciously manifested. This would allow the feeling theorist to say that the relevant bodily sensations are present, even if the agent is unaware of them.

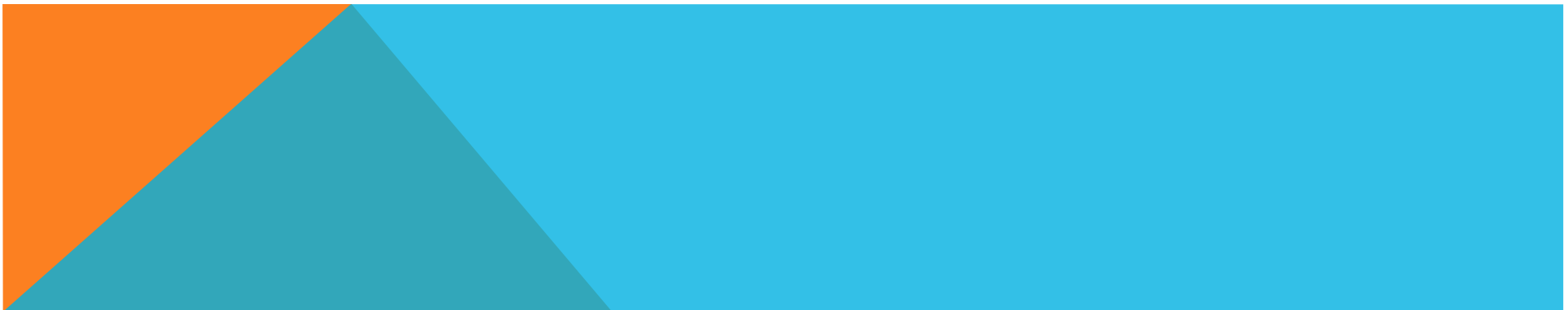


Martha Nussbaum (b. 1947)



THE PARADOX OF FICTION

- ❑ Fiction can make us feel emotions: books can make us feel sad, horror films can make us scared, and so on. But how is this possible, given that we know that what is being depicted is unreal?
- ❑ In normal life, if we discover that an apparent situation that made us feel an emotion was in fact unreal, then we tend to lose the relevant emotion. If you felt sympathy for someone because you thought they had been wronged, but then you realised they hadn't been wronged at all, then your feeling of sympathy would disappear (perhaps to be replaced by a different emotion, like annoyance, depending on why you have changed your mind about this situation).
- ❑ So why does fiction generate emotions given that we know it is unreal? This is the *paradox of fiction*.



THE PARADOX OF FICTION

- ❑ How might one respond? One response might be to claim that we don't really feel emotions in response to fiction, such that these are as fictional as the fiction itself.
- ❑ This would be a very natural response from the cognitive account of emotion. On this view in recognising that, say, the horror film is unreal, one is not really feeling scared, but rather merely going through the motions of being scared. Sure, we might have a physiological response, but it doesn't qualify as a genuine emotion. But isn't the emotion in play real, contrary to what is being proposed here?
- ❑ Another response might be to argue that just as perception can be directed at illusion, so emotions might similarly be sometimes directed at illusion too, in this case in the form of fiction. But notice that there is a disanalogy here, in that in illusions one is related to the world in an illusory way, but this is not the case with fiction, as one is fully aware that it is unreal.



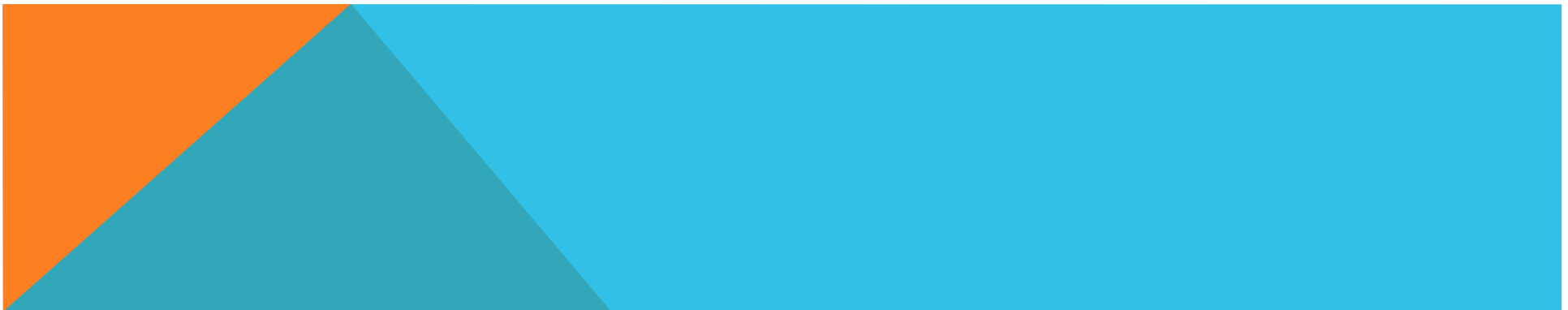
EMOTIONS AND RATIONALITY

- ❑ We often suppose that emotions run contrary to reason, or at least are not to be evaluated rationally.
- ❑ After all, one's emotions can be completely insensitive to reason, as when one's phobias (of spiders, say) remain even when one is convinced that there is nothing to be scared of (e.g., that the spider before you is completely harmless).
- ❑ Can one's emotions ever be rational?



EMOTIONS AND RATIONALITY

- ❑ Notice that emotions are a lot like beliefs, and beliefs *can* be rationally assessed. They are alike in that we usually have no direct control over either. I can't choose whether to believe right now that I'm 12 feet tall any more than I can choose to be very happy about an event that in fact seriously depresses me.
- ❑ If this analogy holds, then perhaps emotions can be rationally assessed too. In particular, just as we judge a belief to be irrational when it doesn't fit well with the evidence, perhaps the same goes for emotions (e.g., irrational fears, like phobias)?



EMOTIONS AND RATIONALITY

- ❑ A related issue here is whether emotions can be reasons for acting a certain way. That certainly seems right: one's reason for not speaking to you might be that I'm angry with you.
- ❑ But we can then ask whether this is a good reason for acting in this way, and that raises the question of whether this emotion is a rational one to hold.
- ❑ If we think that it isn't—e.g., that one's anger is due to a completely off-kilter reading of the situation—then we won't think that this emotion is a good reason to act in this way.
- ❑ But if we think that it is—e.g., that one's anger is rooted in an appropriate representation of the facts—then we will think that it is a good reason to act in this way.

