

Abstract: How can you know that you're not a brain in a vat, being electrochemically stimulated to have the experiences that you're now having? Some philosophers (Putnam, Davidson, Burge) attempt to answer this question by appeal to the a priori metaphysics of content, or belief, or our cognitive faculties. Other philosophers (e.g., Russell, BonJour, Vogel) attempt to answer it by appeal to an empirical inference to the best explanation. I argue that neither answer is successful. The correct answer to the question is that it is an a priori constraint on an agent's total evidence set that it empirically supports its own veridicality.