

24.500/Phil253 topics in philosophy of mind/perceptual experience



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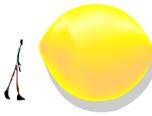


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plan

- martin, transparency
 - the objection to intentionalism
 - the argument for the dependency thesis

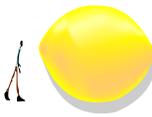
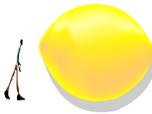


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intentionalism (roughly):

- perceptual experience represents that such-and-such
- the content of experience (the proposition that such-and-such) is the same in the good and bad cases
 - for instance, when Tye is hallucinating, “his experience represents the presence of a blue expanse of water in his environment” (385)
 - the content of experience is thus abstract and not particular



disjunctivism (roughly):

- there is no common content
- in the good case, “the fact perceived is itself ‘made manifest’ to the subject and is constitutive of his experience” (399)
 - and the blue expanse is a “constituent”
- in the (hallucinatory) bad case, “I am in a situation which I cannot distinguish from that one [the good case]” (401)
 - I am having an experience of a blue expanse iff either I am veridically perceiving a blue expanse or I am not veridically perceiving but cannot know that I’m not



Figure by MIT OCW.

the dependency thesis

- to imagine [sensorily] an F is to imagine experiencing an F
 - 'F' replaced by 'pig', 'table', 'unicorn', etc.

Phil. How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen?

Hyl. No, that were a contradiction.

Phil. Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of conceiving a thing which is unconceived?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. The, tree or house therefore which you think of is conceived by you?

Hyl. How should it be otherwise?

Phil. And what is conceived is surely in the mind?

Hyl. Without question, that which is conceived is in the mind.

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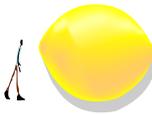


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- “sensory” imagination = imagination that involves mental imagery
- some issues:
 - the imagery debate
 - common representations
 - (neo-) Humeanism
 - see McGinn
 - the dependency thesis

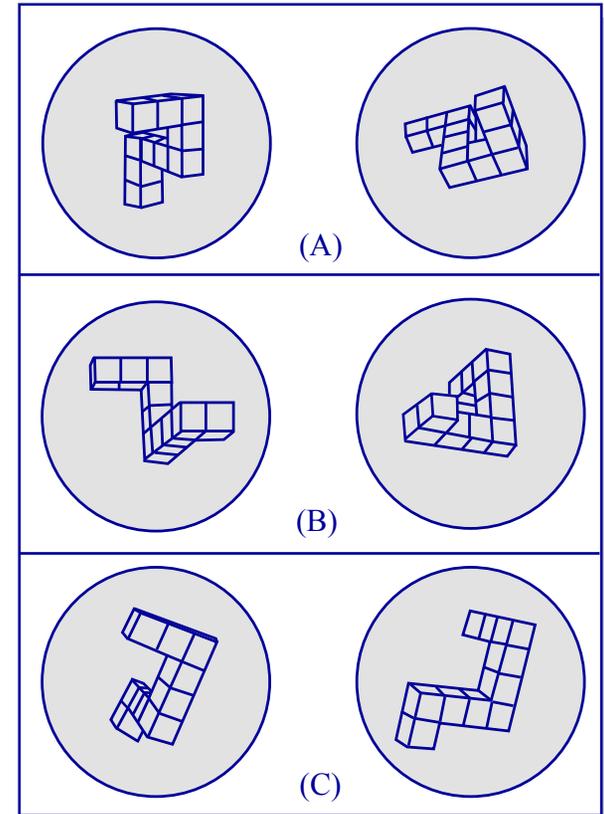


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immediacy

- when one imagines an F, the imagined situation contains an F (414)
 - an apparent triviality
- but now, given the dependency thesis, intentionalism looks problematic, because the intentionalist holds that one can “experience an F” in the absence of an F



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1. experiencing an F does not entail that an F exists
so (plausibly):
2. when one imagines experiencing an F, the imagined situation need not contain an F
but, by the dependency thesis:
3. when one imagines experiencing an F, the imagined situation must contain an F
 - contradiction



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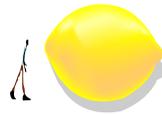


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- what about revising the dependency thesis?

to imagine an F is to imagine perceiving an F

- now there is no contradiction, because perceiving an F does entail that an F exists



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- taking this route, Martin thinks, requires affirming:
when one imagines experiencing an F, the imagined situation need not contain an F
- that is: “the visualizing must be neutral about what objects the imagined situation is taken to contain” (417)
 - which, Martin thinks, is implausible (417-8)



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a problem

- when one imagines an F, the imagined situation contains an F (414)
 - an apparent triviality
- but now, given the dependency thesis, **disjunctivism** looks problematic, because the **disjunctivist** holds that one can “experience an F” in the absence of an F

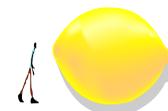


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so how does the disjunctivist escape the argument?

according to the disjunctivist, a visual experience of an expanse of water which is [a] veridical perception involves the patch of water as a constituent of the experience...when one visualises such an expanse of water, one thereby imagines **such an experience** and **hence** the constituents of the experience...(414)

- isn't Martin revising the dependency thesis?
- and why the 'hence'?
 - imagining a tiger need not involve imagining the tiger's kidneys

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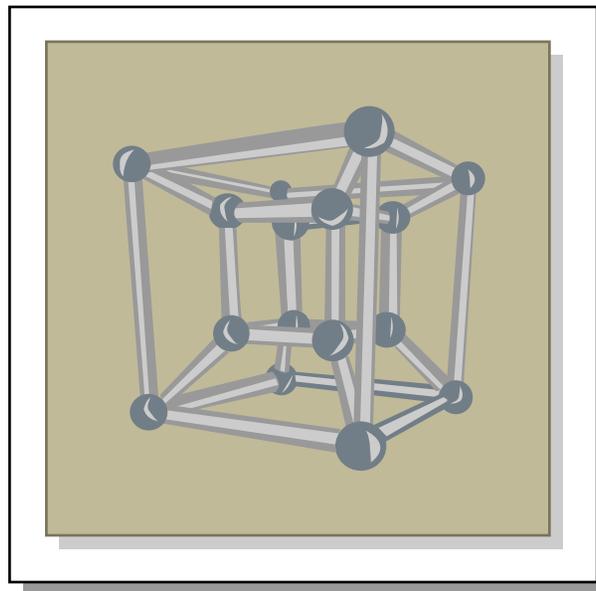
1. experiencing an F does not entail that an F exists
so (plausibly):
2. when one imagines experiencing an F, the imagined situation need not contain an F
but, by the dependency thesis:
3. when one imagines experiencing an F, the imagined situation must contain an F
 - the dodgy step



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compare:

- that there is a cube does not entail that there is a 3D cube (there are 4D cubes, e.g.)

hence[?]

- when one imagines a cube, the imagined situation need not contain a 3D cube

see 413 on the “reverse cartesian” principle



the argument for the dependency thesis

- to imagine an F is to imagine experiencing an F
 - imagining experiencing an F \Rightarrow imagining an F
 - plausible, and the needed direction for the previous argument
 - imagining an F \Rightarrow imagining experiencing an F
 - controversial

- what explains the similarity between seeing a pig and imagining (visualizing) one?
- the “community of properties” view (neo-Humeanism: see McGinn)
 - similar contents, e.g.
- the “intentional” view
 - imagining is...experiential precisely because what is imagined is experiential (406)
 - that is, imagining a pig is imagining experiencing a pig

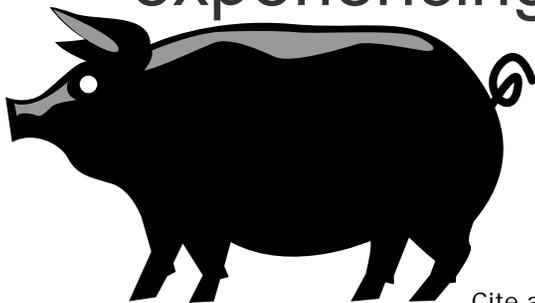


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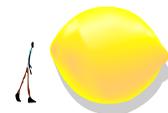


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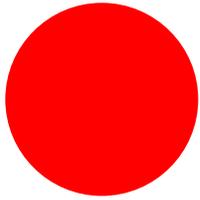
against the CoP view (405-6)

- the community of properties view can't be right in general, because
- feeling an itch is sufficient for the existence of an itch, and
- on the CoP view, if one imagines an itch then one is feeling a faint itch, yet
- imagining an itch is not sufficient for the existence of an itch
- further, the intentional view nicely explains the similarity

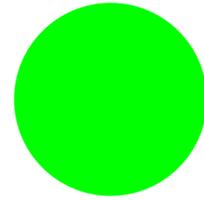
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the point extended...



- one can visualize a red light to the left and a green light to the right, and vice versa
- the red light is on the left (say) in the imagined situation, not (or not necessarily) on the left relative to one's actual egocentric frame
 - “this parallels the case of itchiness”

the red light is imagined...to the left of the point of view within the imagined situation by being imagined...as being experienced as to the left from that point of view (410)

- why ‘experienced’ and not ‘perceived’?

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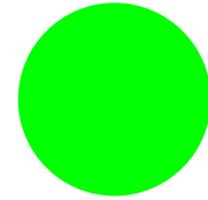
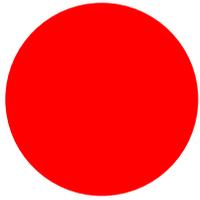


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- the idea seems to be that on the CoP view, visualizing the red light on the left would mean that it is imagined as being, simply, on the left, which it need not be
 - turning your head need not change the imagined situation
- the point could also be made with front-back: if one imagines a tiger in front, the imagined situation has nothing to do with where one is in fact facing

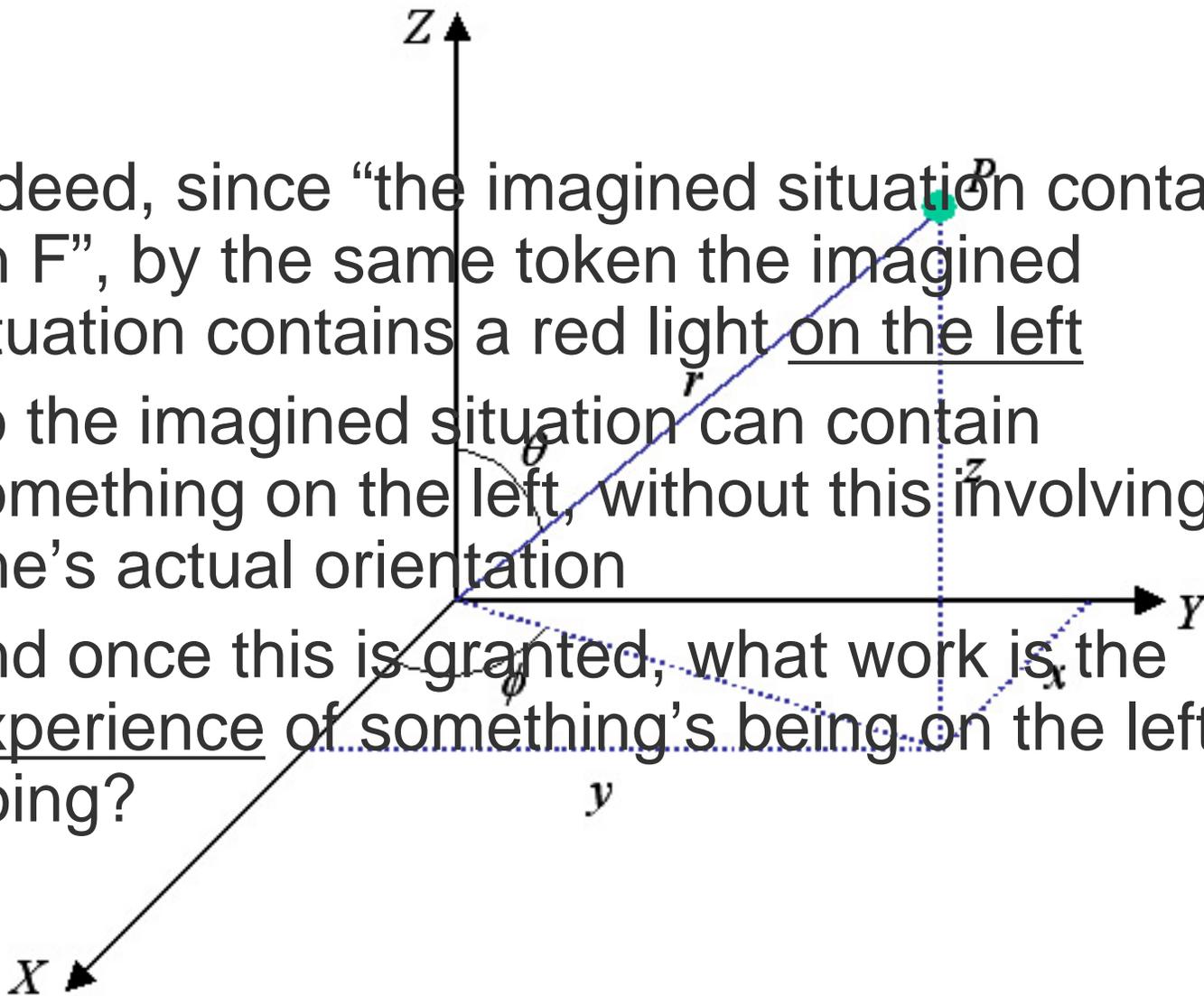


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- but, if Martin's solution is acceptable: "the red light is imagined...to the left of the point of view within the imagined situation by being imagined...as being experienced as to the left from that point of view" (410)
- why isn't this:
- the red light is imagined...to the left of the point of view within the imagined situation by being imagined...as being to the left from that point of view?

- indeed, since “the imagined situation P contains an F ”, by the same token the imagined situation contains a red light on the left
- so the imagined situation can contain something on the left, without this involving one’s actual orientation
- and once this is granted, what work is the experience of something’s being on the left doing?



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