

24.500/Phil253 topics in philosophy of mind/perceptual experience



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plan

- second squib
- leftovers
 - experience and content
 - left to the end, if we have any time
- thought insertion

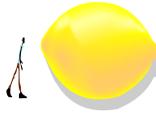


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the content view (CV)

1. there is a stative propositional attitude (call it ‘experiencing’)
 - not a tendency to believe, etc.
2. it is non-factive, and has a mind-to-world direction of fit
 - in these respects like belief
3. it is present in ordinary cases of perception
4. the relevant content is (sometimes and roughly) conveyed (in the visual case) by ‘the way things look’, etc.

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1. illusions don't show that CV is true
2. 'looks' statements are either:
 - comparative (Pia looks like her sister, it looks as though it were a Vermeer)
 - epistemic (it looks as if Pia's sister is approaching)
3. the comparative kind gives us content, but too much
4. the epistemic kind is a matter of factive meaning, and so 'collapses representation into indicating'
5. hence, no 'looks-indexing'
6. CV is not needed to account for illusion, and 'looks'-statements do not help, so CV is without support

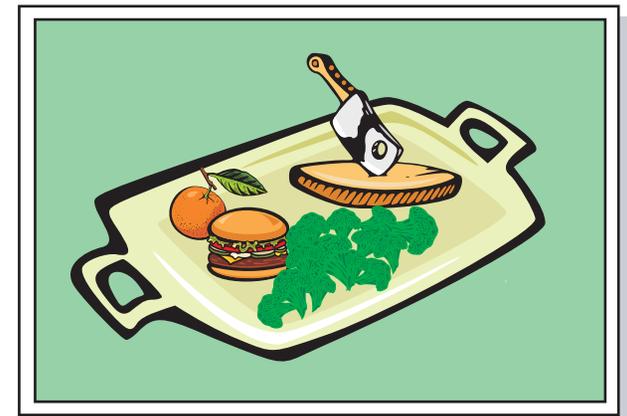
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Figure by MIT OCW.

CV as the best explanation of illusions

- in the case of the Müller-Lyer, one does not believe that the lines are unequal
- but one does experience that the lines are unequal
 - hence the illusion
- in the case of a plate of ‘tasty’ plastic food, one does not believe that it is tasty
- and one does not experience that it is tasty
 - hence no illusion



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CV as the best explanation of illusions



Figure by MIT OCW.

- back to naïve realism:

The intuitive idea is that, in perceptual experience, a person is simply presented with the actual constituents of the physical world themselves. (Brewer)

- but what is it to have a ‘perceptual experience’ that ‘simply presents’ a portion of one’s environment?



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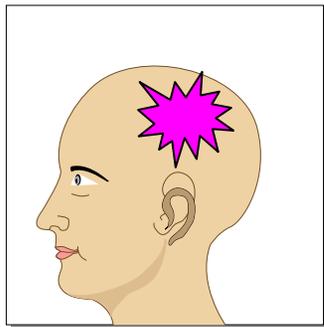


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- one sees the galah, but that's not all
- the galah is 'simply presented' as pink (etc.), not as having been born in Canberra, or as being > 1 mile from Jupiter, or as having a heart
- the fact that that (the galah) is pink has got to get into the story somehow
- 'one sees that the galah is pink' won't do it
 - one can see that the galah is pink even if it looks crimson



Figure by MIT OCW.



Figure by MIT OCW.

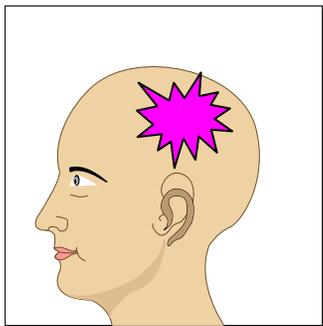


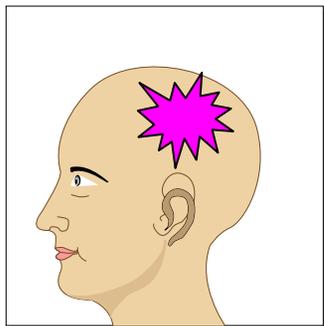
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- the naïve realist should say something like:
 1. there is a stative propositional attitude (call it ‘perceiving’)
 - not a tendency to believe, etc.
 2. it is factive, and has a mind-to-world direction of fit
 - in these respects like knowledge
 3. it is present in ordinary cases of perception
 4. the relevant content is (sometimes and roughly) conveyed (in the visual case, when the subject isn’t misled) by ‘the way things look’, etc.



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- if this much is granted, then the dispute is between the choice of the non-factive attitude experiencing that p
- or the factive attitude perceiving that p
- and given Travis's problem with accounting for illusions, the choice is clear



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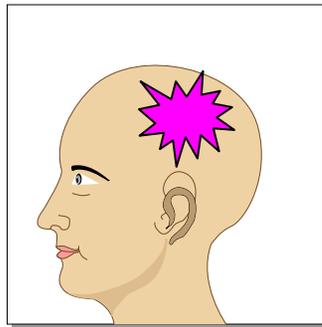


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matters arising

- (prima facie) there are no haggis-illusions
- so, pending some other argument, the content of experience is quite thin (not, e.g., that there is a haggis before me)
- hence the notion of ‘the content of experience’ has little significance for epistemology
- and it’s no surprise that we have no corresponding propositional attitude verb

thought insertion

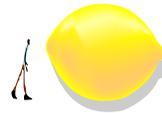


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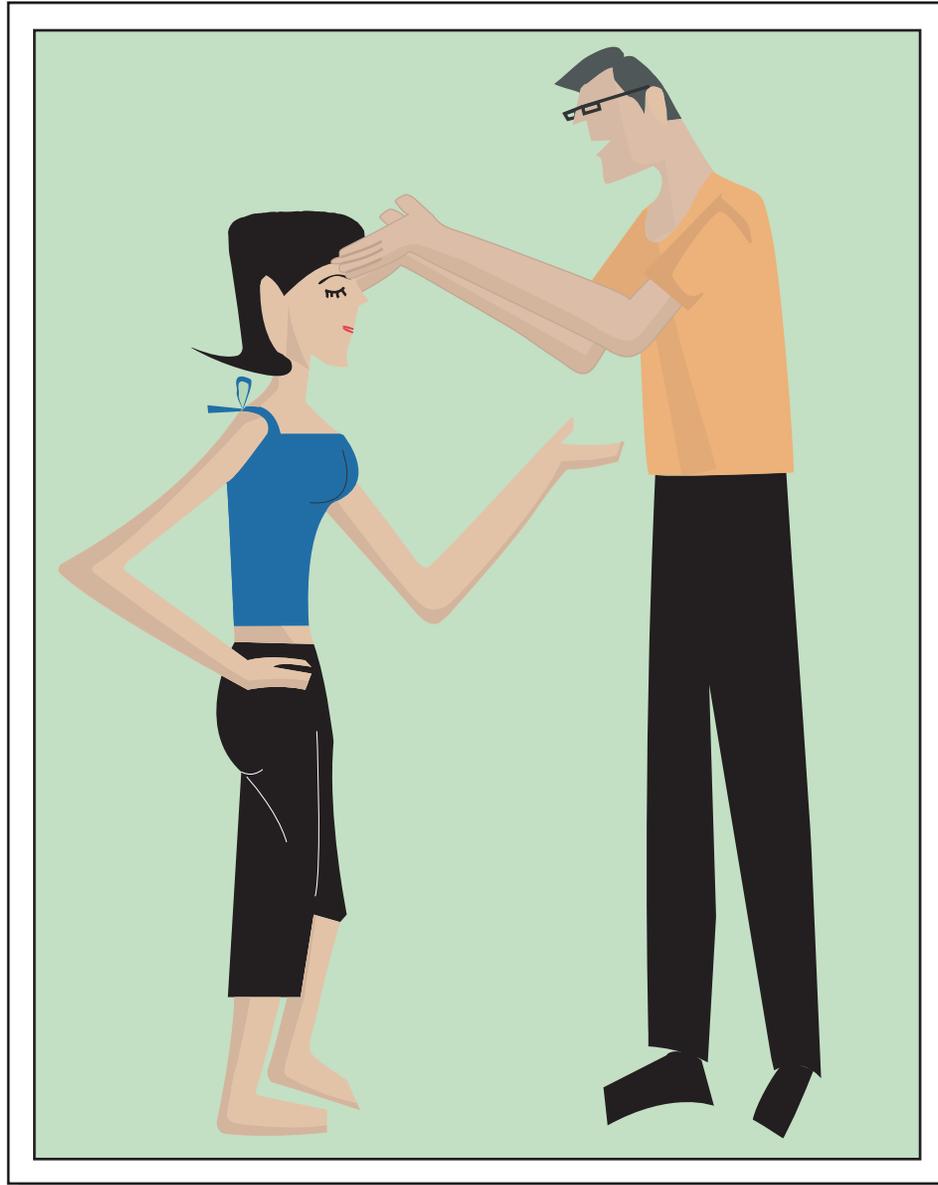


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Figure by MIT OCW.

- Thoughts are put into my mind like “Kill God.” It is just like my mind working, but it isn't. They come from this chap, Chris. They are his thoughts.
- I look out the window and I think that the garden looks nice and the grass looks cool, but the thoughts of Eamonn Andrews come into my mind. There are no other thoughts there, only his. . . . He treats my mind like a screen and flashes thoughts onto it like you flash a picture.

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efference/efferent copy, corollary discharge



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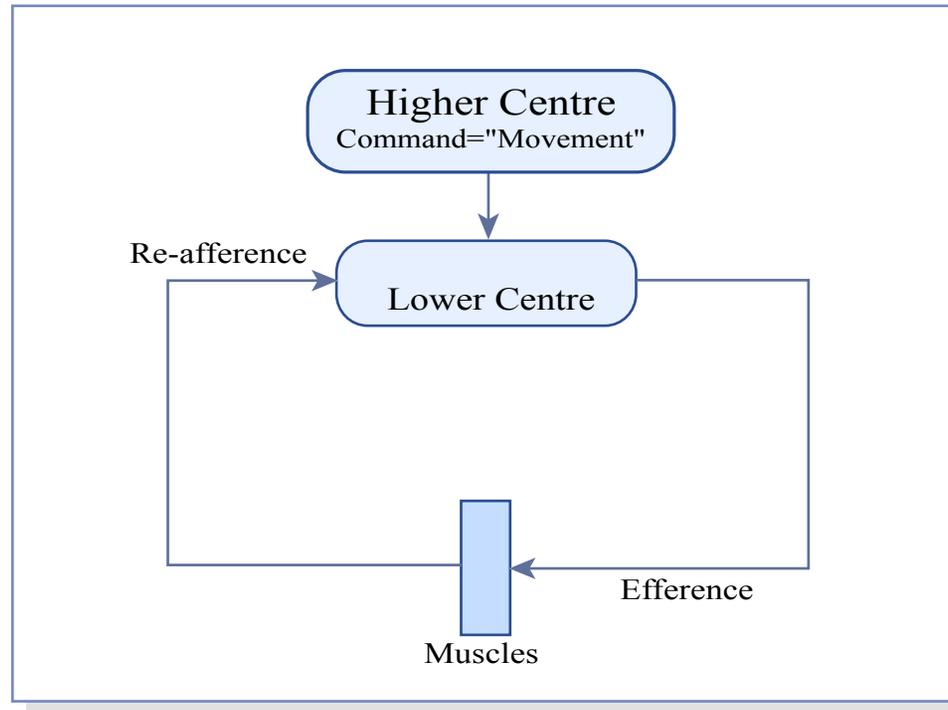


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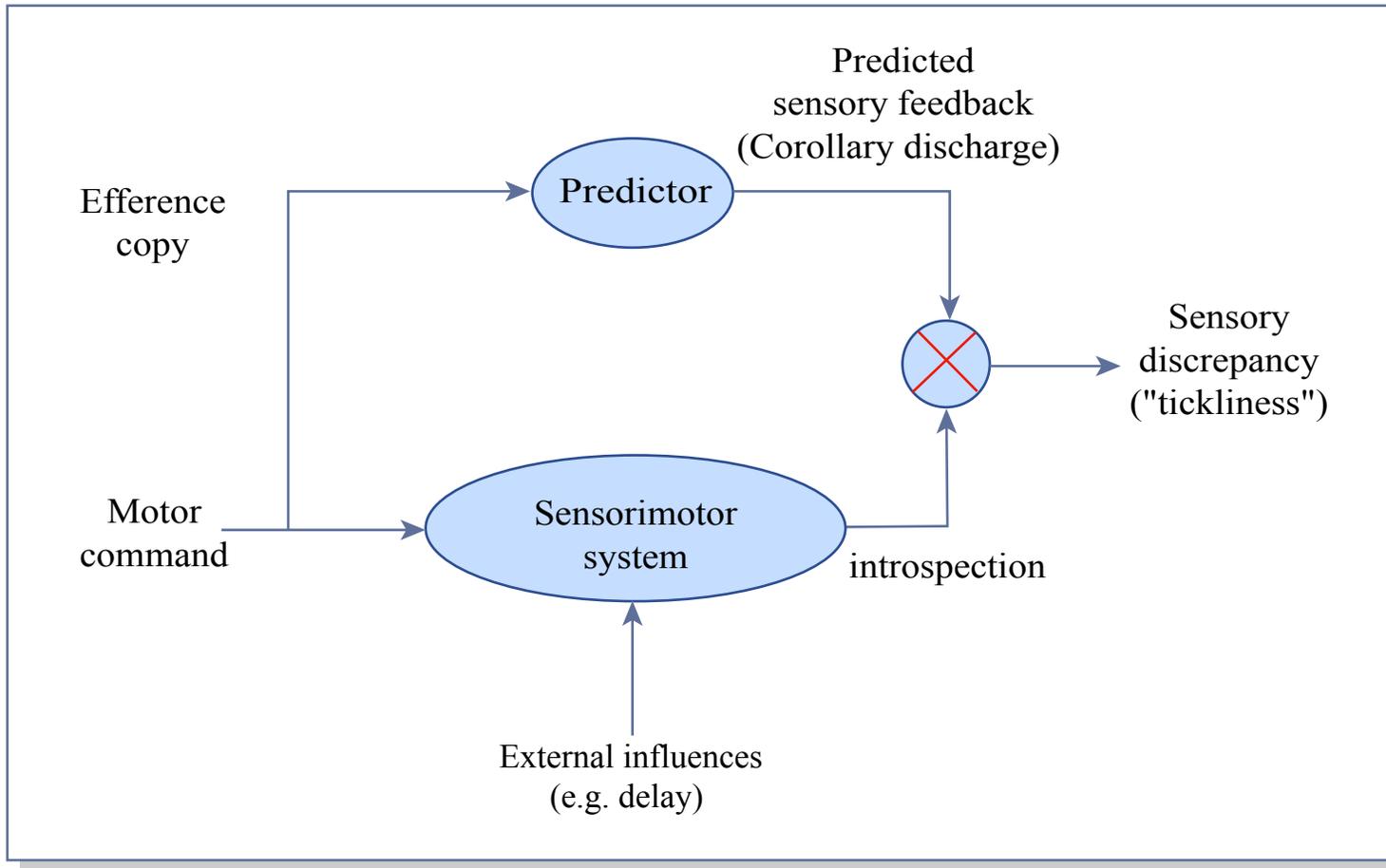


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- Blakemore et al., ‘Why can’t you tickle yourself?’



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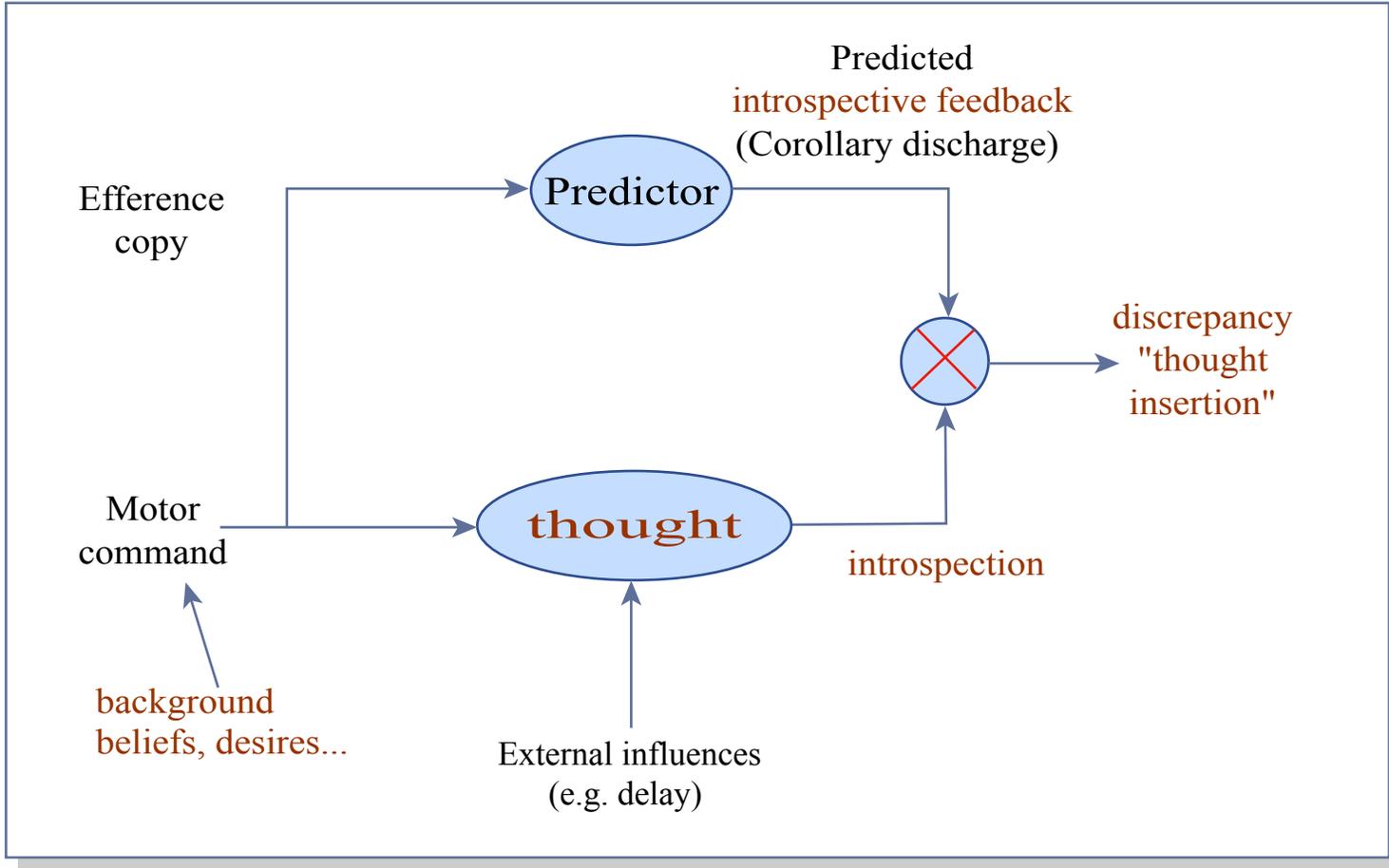


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- Campbell, 'Schizophrenia, ...',

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Figure by MIT OCW.

Campbell, 'Schizophrenia, ...'

- two strands to our notion of the 'ownership' of a thought
 - generative
 - introspective
- the schizophrenic's response is 'broadly rational' (OT, 39)
 - the second strand without the first
- 'the very idea of a unitary person would begin to disintegrate ' if the strands really could come apart in this way
- so 'immunity to error through misidentification' is preserved, sort of

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Figure by MIT OCW.

- A patient who supposes that thoughts have been inserted into his mind by someone else is right about which thoughts they are, but wrong about whose thoughts they are. So thought insertion seems to be a counterexample to the thesis that present-tense introspectively based reports of psychological states cannot involve errors of identification

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Wittgenstein on 'I' (*Blue Book*)



Figure by MIT OCW.

- use as object:
 - ‘my arm is broken’, ‘I have grown six inches’ ‘the wind blows my hair about’
- use as subject:
 - ‘I see so-and-so’, ‘I think it will rain’, ‘I have toothache’
- the first type “involves the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error”
- “to ask ‘are you sure it’s *you* who have pains?’ would be nonsensical”

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- the no-reference view:
 - “to say ‘I have pain’ is no more a statement about a particular person than moaning is”
 - the implication of the next sentence is that ‘I’ in the mouth of a man does not refer to the man who says it
 - the “use as subject” “creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless...the real ego”

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Figure by MIT OCW.

- the no-reference view has obvious problems
 - “I am in pain”; “LW said he was in pain”,
 - “I am in pain, and sitting on a tack”
- ditto the cartesian view (‘I’ used as subject refers to an ego, ‘I’ used as object refers to my body)
 - “I see a canary and have grown six inches”

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Figure by MIT OCW.

- Subject to ETM:
 - ‘I am bleeding’
 - ‘my arm is moving’
- Immune to ETM:
 - ‘I feel pain’
 - ‘I see a comet’
 - ‘I am waving my arm’

 - ‘I am thinking about

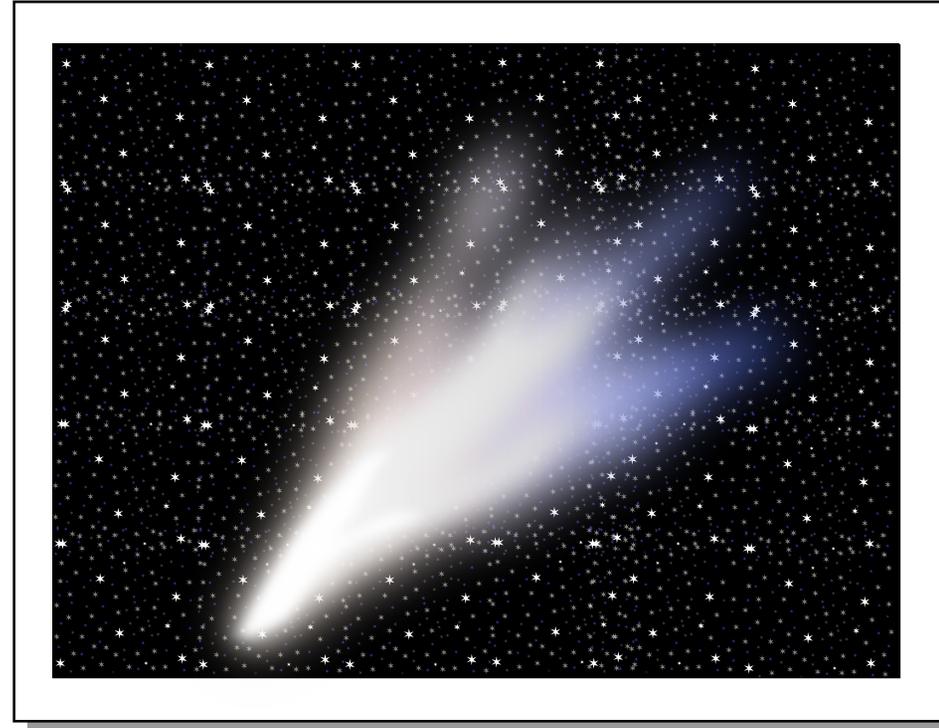


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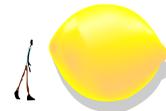


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corrections:

- non-mental statements are IETM
 - ‘I am facing a table’
 - ‘that is yellow’
- and anyway statements simpliciter are not S/I ETM
 - ‘I see a canary’

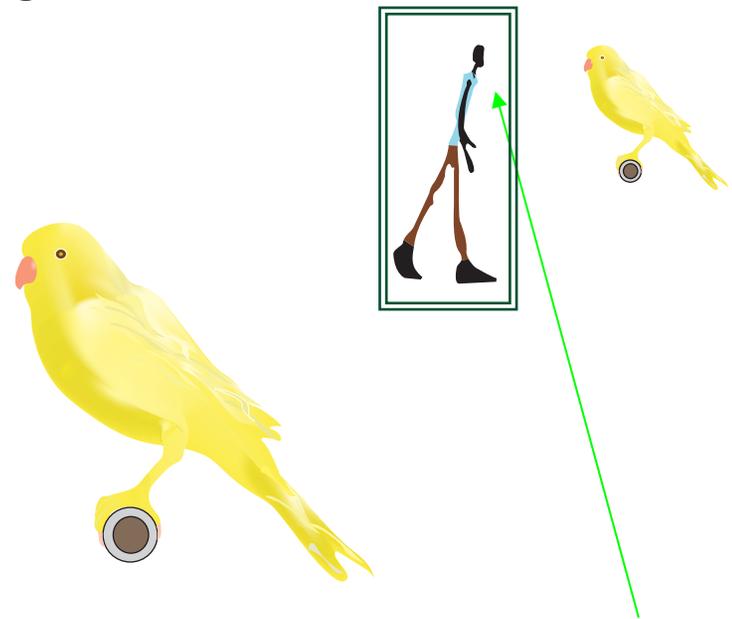


Figure by MIT OCW.

looks like me, wearing a
"lo, there's a canary!"
expression



Figure by MIT OCW.

- S knows that a is F in a way subject to error through misidentification iff:
 - S's evidence for the proposition that a is F is:
 - that b is F (that the G is F, that the Gs are F)
 - that a = b (that a = the G, that a is one of the Gs)
 - and S's identification evidence (i.e. the second bit) could be defeated without her instantiation evidence (i.e. the first bit) also being defeated
- otherwise, S knows that a is F in a way immune to error through misidentification
- if we like, we can speak of a proposition (or “statement”) being SETM (IETM), but this must be relativized to evidence (Evans/Shoemaker)

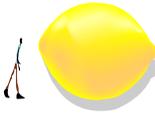


Figure by MIT OCW.

- these reports show that there is some structure in our ordinary notion of the ownership of a thought which we might not have otherwise suspected...[the patient] has, for example, some especially direct knowledge of it...On the other hand, there is, the patient insists, ... a sense in which the thought, as it were, remains the property of someone else



Figure by MIT OCW.

‘two strands to ownership’

1. the person who generated that particular thought...on the model of the person who inscribed a particular signature
2. the one...who can self-ascribe it otherwise than on the basis of observation

(‘The ownership...’)

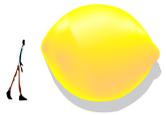


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contrast belief

- the ‘owner’ of the belief that p is simply the person who believes that p
 - perhaps the subject ‘plays a proximal role in the formation of the belief that no one else does’ (cf. OT, 16), but this is not an independent strand
 - if the subject can introspect a belief, presumably it’s hers, at least contingently;
 - but this claim presupposes the notion of ‘ownership’



Figure by MIT OCW.

is 'thought' any different?

- the 'owner' of a thought is simply the thinker of that thought
- given that thoughts can come unbidden, etc. etc., adding that 'you play a proximal role no one else does' doesn't seem to add very much
- if you can 'introspect' a thought, presumably it's yours, at least contingently
 - again, misleading to call this a 'strand of ownership'

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classic thought insertion:

- a thought of x is 'in' my mind, but I am not thinking that thought/you are thinking it

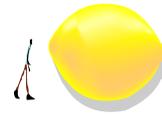


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less puzzling variants:

- I have introspective access to the fact that you are thinking of x
- I have introspective access (only) to the fact that someone is thinking of x

thought influence:

- someone has 'implanted a thought in my mind'; that is, has caused me, in some unusually direct way, to think about x
 - process version: someone is controlling my train of thought about x
- exercise: why is there no 'belief/desire insertion'?

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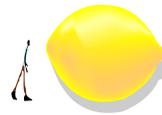


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the real problem about coherence...

- Use of the first person in one's talk and thought requires that there be a causal unity, an object, for the term to refer to. The rule fixing the reference of ['I'] is..."Any token of 'I' refers to whoever produced it"...If we really thought that occurrent thoughts in one person's stream of consciousness were being produced by the beliefs and desires of another person, we really would have some uncertainty over how to interpret these uses of the first person. Since the schizophrenic does take himself to be in that situation, he cannot but experience some uncertainty over the interpretation of his own uses of 'I'