WORKSHOP ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF DANIEL DENNETT & MARC JEANNEROD LECTURE

University of Antwerp, 30th January 2018

THE INSPIRATIONAL ROLE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF DANIEL DENNETT IN THE EMPIRICAL SCIENCES

Csaba Pleh
(CEU Budapest)

1. EMPIRICAL INSPIRATIONS

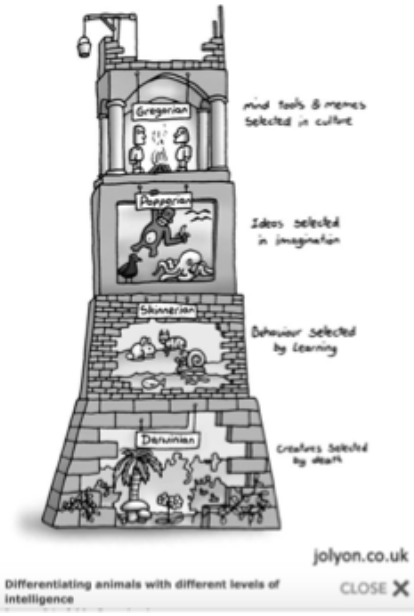
- ethology & ToM in humans
  - Dennett *"helped to spawn the experimental industry of false belief tasks"*
- theory of intentionality
  - → path-breaking studies on rationality of preverbal infants
  - Gergely et al. (1995): 12-month-old infants interpret moving objects as displaying rationality by expecting that agents try to take the shortest route to goals / refer to Dennett (1987) *"has argued that at the core of the intentional stance lies the basic notion of rationality […] The present findings from infancy provide additional empirical support for this strong emphasis on the foundational role of rationality in the intentional analysis of behavior" (p.190)*

2. NARRATIVE THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- no fixed meaning of consciousness ! → recent empirically theories of narrative psychology & self-related issues
  - relations between the proposals of Dennett and those of Lodge, Ricoeur, Bruner, Gallagher
  - topic of crisis in literature & cinema (Proust, Hemmingway, Gide – Pulp Fiction)

3. LEVEL THEORIES AS ORGANIZING TOOLS FOR THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

- intentional, design, psychical stances
  - organize & classify models in psychology while avoiding reductionism
  - metaphor of the Selection Tower
    - tool for the historians smuggle a Popperian flavour to psychology
    - challenge to analyse whether the relations between Darwinian, Skinnerian, and Popperian creatures are merely analogies or if there is some causal (hi)story of the three layers of selection in a grand evolutionary picture

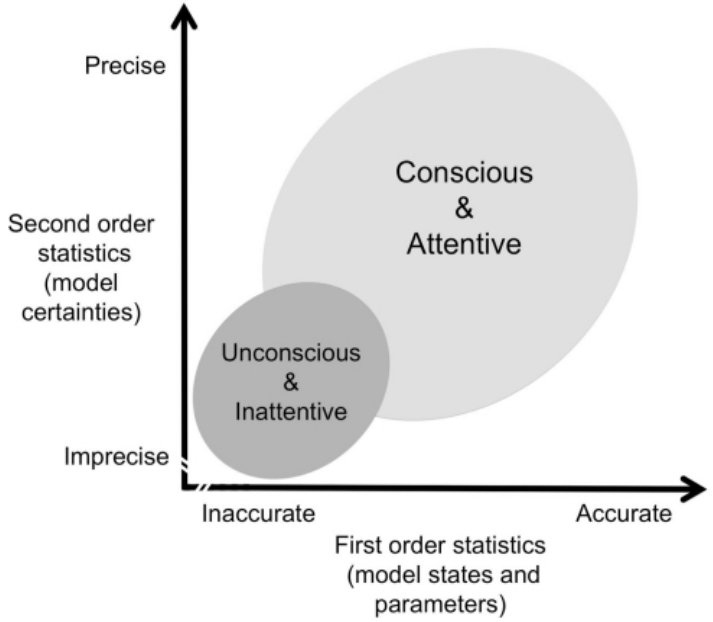


FAME IN THE PREDICTIVE BRAIN: APPLYING DENNETT'S MULTIPLE DRAFTS MODEL' TO EXPLAIN CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE PREDICTIVE BRAIN

DENNETT'S MULTIPLE DRAFT MODEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS & PREDICTION ERROR MINIMIZATION FRAMEWORK (PEM) (FRISTON & FELDMAN 2010)

REF: Spratling (2015) doi 10.1016/j.bande.2015

- Howey (2012)
  - PEM accounts for some of the structural features of consciousness
    - BUT doesn't explain what it is that makes the contents of a state or process conscious at all
    - representational approach to perceptual experience access 'first view' / attention as a necessary control (phenomenal equivalence??)
  - attention acts as weight or gain control on error signal pathways
  - when a hypotheses wins it becomes conscious
- Dennett claims that question of whether a state is conscious or unconscious is simply ill posed
  - multiple drafts model = natural fit for PEM
  - no double-transduction / no Cartesian Theatre
  - → **realize that on PP there is no threshold**
  - needs time to get famous …
  - IF a hypotheses is accurate enough then it becomes conscious?? - Some hypothesis better stay unconscious even though they are accurate etc. - Couldn't there be more than one hypotheses winning? (synaesthesia)



THE QUALIA DELUSION: MAKING ROOM FOR QUALIA A PHYSICALIST CAN LIVE WITH


Aaron Sloman
(Birmingham)


Ron Chrisley
(Sussex)

QUALIA = INTRINSIC, IMMEDIATE, INEFFABLE, PRIVATE

"Quining Qualia" → nothing has these 4 properties → qualia do not exist → eliminate the term

- BUT qualia are an empirical issue

→ even if nothing has the four properties - "qualia" may still refer to something:

- aspects of one's cognitive architecture (products of processes) make the incorrect ascription of these 4 properties so compelling
  - kind of "ontologically conservative heterophenomenology": referents are sought even for terms embedded in an incorrect phenomenological theory

- conscious beings typically suffer from "Qualia Delusion":
  - not the belief that there are qualia - but rather a set of particular faulty beliefs *__about__* qualia

→ What is it good for to believe in these properties even though there are false?

Qualia Delusion = useful cognitive feature, permitting to side-step familiar paradoxes of rationality, e.g. infinite regress of justification of beliefs

Looking for physical qualia – design artificial agents that similarly suffer from the Qualia Delusion

- **believe that easy properties** consciousness (memory, perception, attention)**are hard properties**
  - enable adaptive response to reasoning & communicating about one's own experiences under **resource-limiting** constraints

INTERVENTIONISM FOR THE INTENTIONAL STANCE: TRUE BELIEVERS AND THEIR BRAINS


Markus Eronen
(Groningen)

UNRESOLVED IN PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY:
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES & BRAIN

appealing solution

- Dennett's intentional stance =
  - beliefs & desires are real phenomena, but not necessarily states of the brain
  - BUT fundamental shortcoming: does not seem to leave any causal role for beliefs and desires in influencing behavior

- PRO INTERVENTIONISM
  - intentional states ascribed from the intentional stance should be seen as real (interventionist) causes
  - independently plausible ontological position
  - can response to the latest interventionist causal exclusion worries.

DENNETT AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE


Elliot Carter (Toronto)

Dennett

- short enough timescales question temporal arrangement of our conscious experiences over sub-second intervals cease to be meaningful
- 2 apparently distinct models (Orwellian model / Stalingrad model) of temporal illusions: **postdictive effects**
- **BUT extensionalism vs atomism seems** empirically indistinguishable → not meaningfully different

- → challenge for philosophy of temporal experience, which attempts to decide between rival theories of sub-second experiential timing using evidence from temporal illusions

IF focusing on certain cases involving the perception of simultaneity across perceptual modalities THEN questions about the sub-second temporal arrangement of our conscious experiences are both empirically testable and meaningful

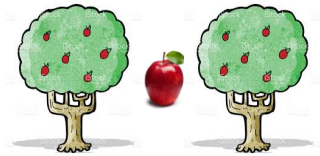
- finish line model
- labelling model

Daniel Dennett (Tufts) Annual Marc Jeannerod Lecture

Facing up the hard question of consciousness

ABSTRACT:
Chalmers introduced the Hard Problem of consciousness in 1995, but in 1991, I drew attention to what I called the Hard Question of consciousness: “And then what happens?” (1991). I pointed out that most theorists of consciousness ignore or postpone indefinitely the task of answering it. They devote their efforts to describing the neural causes of consciousness (often called the “NCC” for Neural Correlate of Consciousness) but then refrain from asking what the typical effects of consciousness are, and why. There are good reasons for this awkward gap in scientific work on consciousness, but we must overcome the difficulties and answer the questions if we are to have any hope of a well-confirmed scientific theory of consciousness.

FACING UP THE HARD QUESTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

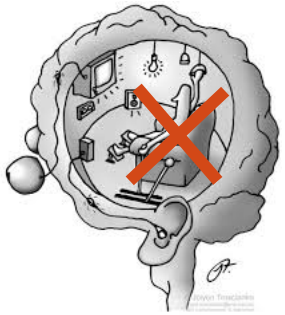


Lashley

no activity of the mind is ever conscious

OBVIOUS FACTS

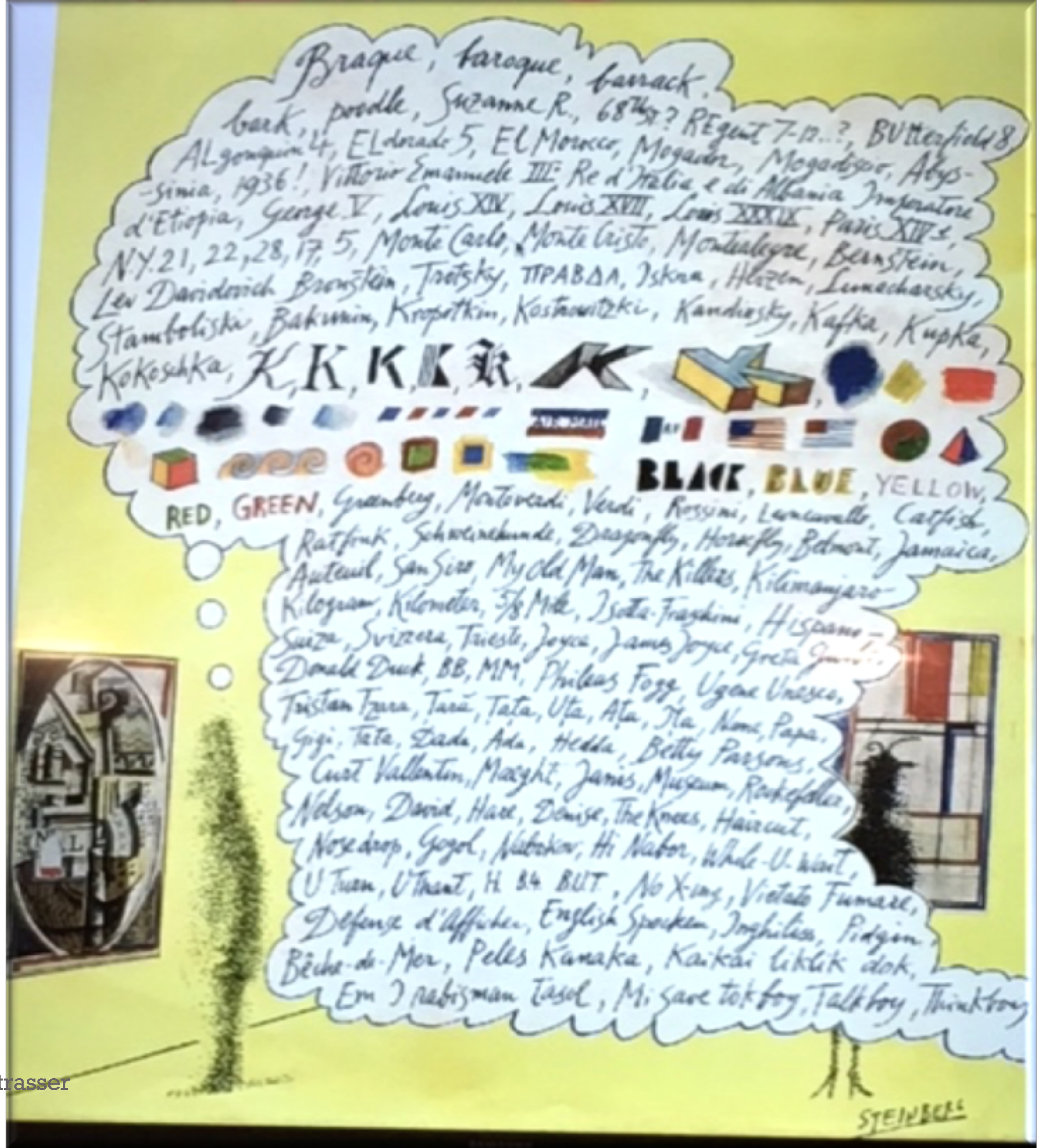
1. no second transduction
2. no Cartesian theatre



MENTAL PAINT
Ned Block
PRODUCTIONS

virtual?!?

- What is consciousness for?
  → providing a space to create virtual governors
  - see options and control what you do
- ONLY HUMANS:
  unlimited representational power


Braque, baroque, barrack.
bark, poodle, Suzanne R., 68th St.? REgent 7-...?, BUtterfield 8
ALgonquin 4, ELdorado 5, El Morocco, Mogador, Mogadiscio, Abys-
-sinia, 1936!, Vittorio Emanuele III Re d'Italia e di Albania Imperatore
d'Etiopia, George V, Louis XIV, Louis XVIII, Louis XXXIX, Paris XIV,
N.Y. 21, 22, 28, 17, 5, Monte Carlo, Monte Cristo, Montealegre, Bernstein,
Lev Davidovich Bronstein, Trotsky, ПРАВДА, Iskra, Herzen, Lunacharsky,
Stamboliski, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Kandinsky, Kafka, Kupka,
Kokoschka, K, K, K, K, K, K,
BLACK, BLUE, YELLOW,
RED, GREEN, Greenberg, Monteverdi, Verdi, Rossini, Catfish,
Ratfink, Schweinehunde, Dragonfly, Horsefly, Belmont, Jamaica,
Auteuil, San Siro, My Old Man, The Killers, Kilimanjaro
Kilogram, Kilometer, 5/8 Mile, Isotta-Fraschini, Hispano-
Suiza, Svizzera, Trieste, Joyce, James Joyce, Greta Garbo,
Donald Duck, BB, MM, Phileas Fogg, Ugene Unesco,
Tristan Tzara, Tata, Ata, Nana, Papa,
Gigi, Tata, Dada, Ada, Hedda, Betty Parsons,
Curt Valentin, Maeght, Janis, Museum, Rockefeller,
Nelson, David, Hare, Denise, The Knees, Haircut,
Nosedrop, Gogol, Nabokov, Hi Nabor, While-U-Wait,
U Turn, U Thant, H 84 BUT, No X-ing, Vietato Fumare,
Défense d'Afficher, English Spoken, Pidgin
Bêche-de-Mer, Peles Kanaka, Kaikai liklik dok,
Em i nabisman tasol, Mi save tok boy, Talkboy, Thinkboy
STEINBERG