

Philosophy of Mind

Illusionism II

Chapman University. PHIL340. Lecture 22. 11/11/2021.
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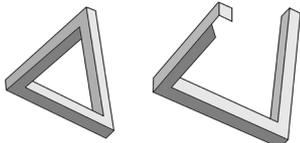
W11 discussion board posts: due 11/13

- ▶ **Post 1:** In your own words, explain one of the main objections to illusionism, and then explain whether you agree with it and why.
200-300 words.
- ▶ **Post 2:** Provide constructive feedback to a post on another student's thread.
100-200 words.

Assignment Rubric Details

Discussion Board Posts				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Post 1 Response to prompt	5.0 pts Excellent The post clearly answers the prompt, demonstrates understanding of the reading, and illustrates independent thinking.	3.0 pts Adequate The post attempts to answer the prompt, demonstrates partial understanding of the reading, but lacks independent thinking.	1.0 pts Inadequate Does not provide clear answer to the prompt and does not demonstrate understanding of the reading.	5.0 pts
Post 2 Constructive feedback	5.0 pts Excellent The post responds clearly to another student's post, offers constructive ideas, and is respectful.	3.0 pts Adequate The post attempts to respond to another student's post, but lacks either constructive ideas or respectful language.	1.0 pts Inadequate Does not respond to another student's post in way that demonstrates thoughtfulness.	5.0 pts
Total Points: 10.0				

Illusionism

- ▶ Experiences have *quasi-phenomenal* properties.
 - ▶ Non-phenomenal, physical properties of experience that introspection misrepresents as phenomenal.
- ▶ Four arguments for illusionism:
 - 1) We need not appeal to consciousness to explain our behavior, so there is no fundamental need to postulate consciousness.
 - 2) Evidence that consciousness is anomalous is really evidence for illusionism, given the suspicious status of introspection. 
 - 3) Illusionism explains both the non-physical character and the causal potency attributed to consciousness.
 - 4) Illusionism can explain the evolutionary origin of (belief in) consciousness: *(mis)representing oneself as non-physical may have had powerful spiritual, motivational, and moral effects on early humans.*

Strong versus weak illusionism

▶ Strong illusionism (Frankish's view)

- ▶ Experiences do *not* have phenomenal properties.

- ▶ They have *quasi-phenomenal* properties:

- Non-phenomenal, physical properties of experience that introspection misrepresents as phenomenal.

▶ Weak illusionism (a form of conservative realism)

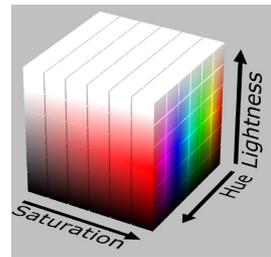
- ▶ Experiences *do* have phenomenal properties.

- ▶ They just don't have the *anomalous aspects*:

- Ineffable, intrinsic, private, infallibly known, non-functional, non-physical.

Outward-looking illusionism

- ▶ Jackson (pp.15-16, *Mind and Illusion*) seems torn between weak and strong versions of *outward-looking* illusionism:
- ▶ Strong (outward-looking) illusionism:
 - ▶ “colour experience presents to us as if it were the acquisition of information about **intrinsic** features of our surroundings. But there are no physical features fitting this characterization.”
 - ▶ “we may want to go so far as to say that sensing red misrepresents how things are. If this is right, we should say that nothing is red [and] we should be [illusionists] about red.”
- ▶ Weak (outward-looking) illusionism:
 - ▶ “A more moderate position is that though our experience of colour contains a substantial degree of misrepresentation—the misrepresentation that leads dualists astray—there are complex physical properties ‘out there’ which stand in relations near enough to those captured by the colour solid for us to be able to identify them with the various colours.”



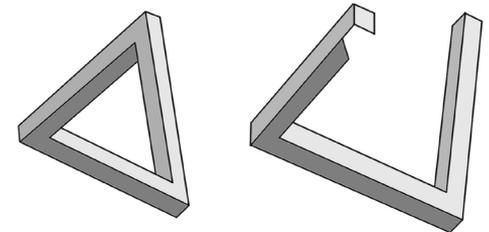
Are we zombies?

- ▶ **Two definitions:**
 - ▶ A zombie is physically identical to an ordinary human being but
 - 1) is not conscious, there is nothing it is like to be it.
 - 2) is “all dark inside”.
- ▶ **Do illusionists think we are zombies?**
 - ▶ According to 1), yes.
 - ▶ According to 2), no.
 - ▶ Our illusions are vivid, so we cannot say we have no inner life.

Four objections to illusionism

▶ Objection 1: denying the data

1. People sometimes feel pain (core data).
2. If illusionism is true, no one feels pain.
3. Therefore, illusionism is false. [[Chalmers 2018](#)]



▶ Objection 2: no appearance/reality gap

1. “Illusion” presupposes a *gap* between appearance and reality.
2. For consciousness, there is *no* gap e.g. *appearing* to be in pain *just is* being in pain.
3. Therefore, consciousness cannot be an illusion.

▶ Objection 3: who is the audience?

1. “Illusion” presupposes an audience.
2. Consciousness does not have an audience.
3. Therefore, consciousness cannot be an illusion.

▶ Objection 4: representing phenomenality

1. Introspective representations *contain* phenomenal concepts.
2. Phenomenal concepts *contain* phenomenal properties.
3. Therefore, *if* introspective representations exist *then* phenomenal properties exist.