

Consciousness

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February 12, 2024

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Chapter 1

Sensation

The other day I had a fascinating, although heated argument about how "the experience of color is different than the idea of color." Eventually, it culminated in both me and my friend getting frustrated with each other, to the point where I felt bad and apologized later.

Originally, I just offered the statement itself as the argument. To me, it was a truism. I did not want to even open an argument – just say a fact, and continue on rambling about whoever or whatever.

However, my friend shot back with "no, they are the same," much to my surprise, and now chagrin. In all honesty, I do not remember his argument in it's entirety. I do remember, however, a point that he brought up that made me realize that we are arguing something semantics instead of what I originally meant. He said that we associate red with anger and intimacy because red generates those feelings, and thus the experience of red is the same as the idea of red. I realized that the "experience of red," as he described it, was instead the interpretations of red that we generate when we see, or sense, red. Not necessarily the sensation of red itself.

Okay, so my new argument was that the "sensation of color is different from the idea of color." *Still*, he disagreed, presumably for the same reason. Sensation of color or sight of color still implies interpretation of the sight

of the color itself.

It was then when I realized that arguing this was intensely complex, and *way* out of my league of argument. I then resorted to calling him stupid. Pretty much a win in my books.

When I refer to the "sensation of color" or the "experience of color," I refer to the sight of color itself. When you are looking at a red object, specific cones in your retina activate and send a signal to your brain that is the "sensation of color," and more specifically, the "sensation of red." It is only when we interpret this signal that we can discern that red object is red. When I say "the experience of color is different than the idea of color," I am saying that the sensations generated by looking at color, through eyesight specifically, and with no further interpretation, is different than the thought of color itself, whether generated through interpretation of eyesight or not.

Now would you believe, that when I said this, my friend still disagreed? I sure didn't. He said that both the experience of color and the idea of color themselves are instinctual, and that is why the experience of color is the same as the idea of color. This idea implies a lot more interesting things about consciousness.

You know that one thought experiment that goes something like: "could you explain how red looks to a blind person?" The experiment stipulates that the blind person has never and will never experience color through their eyes.

If the experience of color is separate from the idea of color, this means that this is always impossible. When you explain something, you can *only* explain the idea of it. Thus, you can never explain the experience of color itself, since no matter what, you cannot find something they associate with the experience of red, since they have never experienced red.

But, when the experience of color is the same as the idea of color, for example through instinct, or some similar process, it is actually quite easy.

If color itself and the associations thereof has been built through instinctual processes, just explain something that is viscerally red, and then say to the blind person that the experience they just had was red.

Wait, let's step back for a moment. The term "red" itself is a generalization of a spectrum of different colors that one can see. It is not necessarily a specific shade of a specific color, but instead many different colors that "look similar" to one another. Let's take that same blind person, and let's say we have another, unique explanation that will incite a different experience of color that people with sight would classify as red. Let's not tell this blind person anything about that color, just to mess with them. What would they call that color?

This is the difference between an instinctual interpretation versus a non-instinctual interpretation of "the experience of color is the same as the idea of color." An instinctual-purist would go "well, the blind person would call it red! Instincts tell them that the color is similar to the 'red' they were shown before." This makes sense, as thankfully we do not have to teach children that every possible shade of green is green.

However, a non-instinctual-purist would go "well, the blind person could not classify it as anything! They were never taught that the color they experienced also generalizes to red." This would then imply, however, that the idea of color itself cannot be lumped together like how the experiences of color are lumped together by how they "look similar." That would imply, then, that the experience of color is different from the idea of color. Aha! A contradiction!

That means that the only way that the experience of color is the same as the idea of color is that we viscerally know the experience of color. Thus, that means that "the experience of color is same as the idea of color" if and only if we viscerally know the experience of color.

Let's step back even further, before the statement itself. When I said "the

experience of color is different than the idea of color” I was *really* saying that we don’t viscerally know the experience of color. My friend and I argued so long not because both of us didn’t know what I meant. But I do now!

I would say that we *don’t* viscerally know the experience of color because any instinctual associations of color are inherently based off of the experience of color itself. In other words, we are aware of the experience of color, and so we can lump colors together based on how they look, not because we were born with that ability in our minds already, but because the experience of color and the experience of sight itself allows you to lump colors together.

The idea of colors looking similar is inherently based upon the experience of sight itself. When you see two shades of red, you experience a signal that are sorta close to each other, and so to you, they might as well be the same color. So when you think of the relationship of two colors in your brain, you interpret the colors as signals being similar. But for a blind person, the idea of a signal being similar doesn’t mean anything to them, since they have never experienced this signal or the fact that some parts of it are similar to each other at times.

In other words, you don’t have instincts relating to your senses, it is instead how your senses interact with your brain that then establishes patterns that could be interpreted as instinct.

Let’s say that we can devise an explanation that could generate any experience of anything, ever. Just the fact that this explanation exists proves that the experience of something is the same as the idea of that thing. Why is that true? Well, as before, it is only possible to create an explanation that incites a novel experience of something (as before, color in a blind person) if and only if the experiences are the same as the ideas of that something.

The problem is with custom senses is that it *requires* that we don’t vis-

cerally "know" our senses. If we did viscerally know our senses, then it would mean that custom senses are impossible, since custom senses would require instinct that we were just not born with. But this creates a contradiction! Since the experience of something (as before, color) is the same as the idea of that thing if and only if we viscerally know that experience of that thing already. That means that custom senses are fully impossible, no matter what. Suck on that, hippies! You'll never see the fourth dimension!

1.1 Thought as sensation

Thought is a sensation as any other. It is just a weird one, and rather elusive. When I say *thought as sensation*, I mean thought itself as a sensation, not discrete thoughts that we verbalize into things like "I like this book" or "the author is ravishingly handsome." Just as you can separate sight into seeing colors, you separate thought as a sensation into specific, discrete "thoughts."

Thought, the sensation, is comprised of memory and imagination, and has the limitations of any other sense. You can't hear a color in the same way you can't think to see. You can imagine what you would see – but that, itself, is not sight, as it would be a product of thought, not sight. This also goes for memories. This limitation has far-reaching consequences, and, overall, has been pretty bad for the human race.

Memory and imagination also could never be sight because of another limitation. In order to remember situations and facts from our awareness, we must generalize them. For example, you wouldn't remember the specific shade of red on an apple, how that red interacted with the light, the variances in the gleam of the apple's surface. You would just remember that the apple is red and shiny. You could then, later, imagine a red and shiny apple, although not the specific red and shiny apple that you were aware of.

Let me go on a side-tangent. What is consciousness? To the conscious reader (unconscious readers please refer to the companion book *Unconsciousness*), it is the state of awareness. Awareness, then, is consistent and chronic perception. You are always taking in and being aware of facts through your senses. Are all your senses then awareness itself or just tools of awareness? In other words, is consciousness a product of the senses or all of the senses themselves?

It's pretty obvious, actually. You can't be aware if you don't have any senses at all. Thus, consciousness is all of your senses combined. This could only be true, of course, if we consider thought as a sensation. I consider thought as a sensation because it is best way to classify the inputs the brain is given. Thought is an input like any other, but it is also generated by the brain itself. It's like a black-box function that takes it's output as an input again.

What is hunger, arousal, etc then? Like any other sensation, it is just the body sending a signal to the brain, and then the brain can act on that as it wishes. With arousal, for example, the brain can release chemicals in anticipation of certain behaviors that were pleasurable in the past, such as sex. What about thoughts themselves being arousing? Like how with the sight of certain... *ahem...* things are arousing, thought is a sensation that can be arousing like any other. Or with hunger, the feeling makes you follow habit or the pain of starvation makes you plan for a solution.

Wait a second. If you can't think of sight, hearing, thought, or other senses, that would mean that you could not think of consciousness itself. Since your consciousness is *you*, that means you can't think of yourself. This is difficult to grasp, and has also been the source of many arguments I start.

This implies, then, that the experience of consciousness is different from the idea of your consciousness. For one, any idea of the full consciousness is only a product of thought, and thus is not you, the consciousness. Think

back as to why imagining sensations of sight would not be actual sensations of sight itself, but instead processed through the sensation of thought. As well, as any idea of consciousness is a product of thought, it is subject to the limitation of generalization, that it will never fully be an in-depth realization of the full consciousness. Thus, it will never be you, as it is not a full picture of you.

That is why I argued that "the experience of color is different than the idea of color." It is because the greater experience of consciousness itself, is always different than the ideas of consciousness. However, why does the experience of consciousness being different than the idea of consciousness imply then that the experience of color is different than the idea of color? Since color is a generalization of sensations of sight, and sight is part of being aware and conscious, color is just an idea and generalization of consciousness.

Okay, what else does not being able to think of yourself imply? A lot, actually. I would actually blame a lot on "not being to think of yourself" in terms of depression, anxiety, angst, jealousy, envy, pity, etc. The delusion of being able to think of yourself opens a wandering mind into thinking a lot of bad. But that same delusion also allows one to think about themselves in a very good light. Is it a net neutral then? I dunno.

Chapter 2

Ego

Let's say that there was an entity that was constantly watching you, and reading your mind. For every moment, it will count *every* single truth about you and about everything that has happened and will happen to you. As well, this entity will save it's completely objective truths about you in the *Book of Truths*.

Let's say, that right now, you created an autobiographical *Book of You*, that tries to replicate the *Book of Truths* as closely as possible, of course without reading it. It will include every single detail you remember about yourself, from the excruciating to the sexy. Let's start with a pretty simple question: is the *Book of You* the same as the *Book of Truths*?

Pretty obviously no, as you will never know fully as to what is in the *Book of Truths*. There are things that happened to you when you were little, there are things that happen to you when you sleep. But, there are also things that you forget. You don't remember everything, and thus, any replication of the *Book of Truths* you will make will be incomplete and/or incorrect. As you age, you'll get better at approximating the truth, as you have more truth in comparison to forgotten things to remember and write down.

Ego is a tricky topic to navigate. The word "ego" has many meanings,

from western psychology and the Freudian structural theory, to its application in eastern philosophy as a translation for their ideas. As such, the confusion that it generates deters me heavily from using it. However, I must refer to ego at least once, to connect it to the rest of my analogy. When I refer to ego, I mean the self-image of one's self, or, in other words, your subjective identities.

The ego is a constant process of creating and updating a personal *Book of You*. You use this book to decide how to act, finding what is shameful and what is cool about you, and then planning accordingly to avoid or exaggerate certain aspects of you.

Immediately, however, you can find the fallacy with this behavior. You're reading your own autobiography and then trying to act cooler than that. We also know that the *Book of You* is never going to be accurate, and so any actions taken on it will be pretty inadvisable and untrustworthy. Sigh... if only we had the *Book of Truths* to reference.

What's more interesting is that the *Book of Truths* would also include this process of creating a personal copy of the *Book of You*. That means that the *Book of You* would have to also replicate the process of creating itself, which implies that it's impossible.

2.1 Book of You

The *Book of You* is written in such a way that it is pretty easy to break down and chew. Since the book is about everything about you, it would include every minute detail about all beliefs that you hold about yourself. These beliefs of yourself will show a pretty consistent pattern.

In the *Book of You*, you will often write "I wish I was ..."