

- Each confabulation offered and studied in this book suffers from epistemic failings. The claims are not well-justified, and the confabulators seem to be ignorant of this fact.

- But, is the following true of confabulators?

Confabulators are not worried about something they should be worried about — the truth of what they are saying. (178)

- Confabulation involves problems with creating and checking mental representations. These distinct problems can arise from damage to a single brain region. On the creation phase:

For confabulation to occur, the creative faculty must compose a claim that will elude the existing checking processes, before the claim can be publicly expressed. The representations generated can be neutral, positive, or negative, in the person's way of assigning value to them. (183–184)

On the checking phase:

The checking processes are a second line of defense against committing dangerous, offensive, or ineffective actions, including making ill-grounded and frequently false claims. But perhaps these processes can only work on representations of proper quality. Beliefs based on degraded representations are ill-grounded. We can capture the hypothesis indicated here in the *degraded representation principle*: If a person has a diminished capacity to represent events of type x , that person will be more likely to confabulate about events of type x . (185)

- Hirstein offers the following necessary and sufficient conditions for confabulation:

Jan confabulates if and only if:

1. Jan claims that p . (e.g., Jan claims that her left arm is fine.)
2. Jan believes that p .
3. Jan's thought that p is ill-grounded.
4. Jan does not know that her thought is ill-grounded.
5. Jan should know that her thought is ill-grounded.
6. Jan is confident that p . (187)

○ Hirstein defends the claim that confabulators believe that p by noting that they both claim that p and often act as if p .

○ Hirstein also argues against a unified web of belief.

The idea of a homogeneous web of belief is natural. Nevertheless, there are divisions and partitions in our belief systems, and in our brains' systems for checking beliefs, that allow local irrationalities to remain local. (189)

○ Note the bold claim that Hirstein makes about our ability to determine belief even in cases manifesting great inconsistency.

Even in cases of such inconsistency, however, we can discern what the person believes. When the person with obsessive-compulsive disorder, for instance, goes back to check the lock on her front door again, there is little problem in saying that she believes (even knows) that the door is locked. The problem is that she cannot stop herself from executing the checking action. (189)

○ These confabulations are ill-grounded — they are not produced in the normal way and they are not properly monitored. Also, confabulations must involve errors that normal people would not make.

- Do not worry about the, largely semantic, nuances discussed in §8.5.
- The “real” epistemic issue regarding confabulations is their evidential support, not their truth or falsity.
- Recall the FTL model (as discussed by Mele) when you reflect on Hirstein's 4 categories for evaluating the risks and rewards of belief. (206) Confabulators have a very low threshold for believing (at least certain) thoughts.