

- There are two plausible "departments" of rationality: *procedural* and *content*. Procedural rationality is characterized as follows:

On the procedural account, therefore, one is *irrational* if one's thoughts or actions fail to be governed by the relevant ideal, rule or reasoning procedure . . . Central to the procedural account is the claim that the particular contents of one's thoughts are *not* in general relevant to the analysis of rationality. (148)

A thought (or action) is content irrational if its content is itself implausible or ineligible. Some beliefs or desires, such as a desire for a saucer of mud, might have contents that are so bizarre that it is irrational to have them even if no procedural violation occurs.

- Gold and Hohwy's thesis is that there are delusions, such as those that often accompany schizophrenia, which are irrational but do not fall under either of these two departments. These are cases of *experiential irrationality*.

- Is this claim true?

From a theoretical point of view, however, what is more significant than the bizarreness of delusion is the fact that, in the delusional state, the patient's mind seems invaded by an alien force . . . The alien quality of delusional experience is, in our view, the key to understanding at least some of the delusions of schizophrenia and the nature of the irrationality of schizophrenic delusion. (150)

- Frith's theory of intentional action:

Frith further posits the existence of a cognitive monitor that keeps track of both kinds of intention as well as of the actions that are actually chosen by the subject. In effect, the monitor is a mechanism of *metarepresentation*: it represents the ordered pair of the intention (whether stimulus or willed) and the action chosen

as a result of that intention. Crucially, the effect of metarepresenting an intention is to bring that intention into the subject's consciousness. (151)

We can apply this theory to thought insertion as follows:

Suppose one of my goals is to go to work on time each morning. On a particular morning, I form the intention to catch the bus and then perform the action of thinking 'Catch the bus!' If I have not monitored the intention to catch the bus, I will find myself with a particular thought without any awareness of the intention that initiated it. As a result, I may experience the thought as having been put into my head by someone else — a delusion of thought insertion. (152)

- This experiential rationality proposal should sound familiar, as we found a similar claim made by Gerrans. Gold and Hohwy echo Gerrans when they write:

We propose that delusional irrationality consists in a failure of what we will call *egocentricity*, a property of thought closely related to the self-monitoring central to Frith's theory. Self-monitoring is the cognitive process of representing an intention; egocentricity is the property a thought gets in virtue of being so monitored. It is the property of the thought which allows the thinker of that thought to recognize it as having originated in his mind. (153)

- Gold and Hohwy argue that neither procedural nor content irrationalities can explain the delusion of thought insertion. They discuss various proposals.

- Reflective Equilibrium.

Reflective equilibrium would require rejecting thought insertion in favour of an explanation that cohered better with one's set of background beliefs, including those shared by the culture at large. In general, any account of rationality that requires coherence among beliefs will be violated by the hypothesis of thought insertion. (155)

Response: These errors should not be domain specific, if this were the case. But, they *are* domain specific.

... if the schizophrenic agent has a global impairment in his ability to maintain coherence among his beliefs, one would expect this impairment to be domain-general ... one would expect the agent to experience of every imaginable kind. (157)

But, who said that the impairment would have to be global? Or, why would it have to be so widespread?

◦ Evidence. Delusional schizophrenics ignore relevant evidence and treat other evidence with extreme bias.

Response: Again, Gold and Hohwy claim that this problem should also lead to false beliefs more globally.

◦ Methodology. Those who believe in thought insertion break the rule that we should suspend belief when no reasonable explanation is at hand.

Response: Gold and Hohwy claim that this is too demanding.

In asking the schizophrenic subject to refrain from explaining his experience, we would be asking him to forgo any story about why his experience is so strange, and that seems to be a demand that no agent — at least no agent that approximates actual human agents — could meet. (159)

But is it too demanding to require that a methodologically rational person, in this situation, believe that she is mentally ill?

◦ Content-ineligibility.

Further, the schizophrenic subject manages to incorporate the implausible belief into his system of delusion in a way that is reminiscent of Lewis's description of the 'twisting' of belief and desire, namely, by a *system* of beliefs each of which is highly improbable or impossible on its own but which seems to acquire a veneer of plausibility from its coherence with the others. (157)

Response: Once more, they claim that if this were true there should be very wide spread bizarre beliefs. (160)

But, couldn't this same response be given to any isolated case of apparent content irrationality? But surely there *are* such cases.

• Gold and Hohwy claim that the experience itself is irrational.

We claim, therefore, that the source of thought insertion and related delusions is the experience itself of the schizophrenic subject, and, in particular, its alien quality . . . it is *the experience of non-egocentric thought as alien* that is the delusion itself.

Q: So, such irrationality exists even if the agent who has this experience correctly judges herself to be mentally ill?