

- Stephens and Graham aim to give an account of the experience of agency. They do not offer an account for why the alien thought/voice delusion results from the lack of a sense of agency for some, but not for others.
- They first address externalization — the perceived lack of agency. The first hypothesis they consider is that the externalized thoughts are those that are judged to be involuntary.
 - But many with obsessive compulsive disorder lack voluntary control over their thoughts, though they do not externalize them.
- The second hypothesis to explain externalization is that, after introspecting and applying the intentional stance to herself, the subject judges that the externalized thought does not fit with or express her beliefs and desires. A less demanding version of this hypothesis simply requires some recognition that the thought does not fit one's situation. Stephens and Graham endorse this less demanding version.

That is, whether a person regards a thought (subjectively) in him as something he *thinks*, rather than as a mere episode in his psychological history, depends upon whether he finds it explicable in terms of his conception of what he believes and desires. (165)

- If a thought strikes us as out of place, we might either revise our intentional interpretation of ourselves or externalize. One reason why might externalize is because we do not want to be the type of person who has those kinds of thoughts. This accords well with the psychoanalytic explanations of alien thoughts. However, not all thoughts that are disturbing to us in this way are externalized.

However, it is obvious that not all thoughts found to be distasteful or threatening to self-esteem are experienced as voices or as alien insertions or even as agentically external. (167)

◦ Also, many of thoughts that are externalized are neither disturbing nor disapproved. One needn't have a motivational bias in order to experience a thought as external. Stephens and Graham have a liberal attitude when it comes to the possible explanations of externalization.

Not only do we reject the idea that the failure to recognize relevant intentions must be explained in motivational terms; we don't see why there must be a single explanation of any sort that covers all cases. It may be necessary to tell different stories about why the subject finds her thoughts intentionally inexplicable in various cases. (171)

• It is a big step from externalization to alienation. Stephens and Graham explain this move by pointing out that these thoughts are often intelligent, personally significant, and in the second-person voice. As such, it seems that they are the product of some agent. Stephens and Graham even make this sound like a rational inference.

... our hypothesis is that the apparent intelligence of the thoughts provides the experiential or epistemic basis for attributing to another agent. (174)

Q: But couldn't the same be said about Sacks's message from "Death"?

• Summary statement of their unified account of thought insertion and alien voices:

The centerpiece of our understanding is the notion that thought insertion and nonauditory voices represent the coming apart of two strands in self-conscious experience: the senses of subjectivity and agency. (176)

• Stephens and Graham argue that obsessive compulsive thoughts are not externalized because they do cohere with the subject's beliefs and desires. And, they say the following about delusions of influence:

The merely influenced subject believes that the other has caused *her* to think the thought — i.e., that the other agent has caused her to have the underlying intentional states that cause her to think the thought ... We propose that victims of influence suppose themselves to harbor, perhaps in some sense against their will, the intentional states expressed in their thoughts. (179–180)

But, is this claim about "the underlying intentional states" plausible?