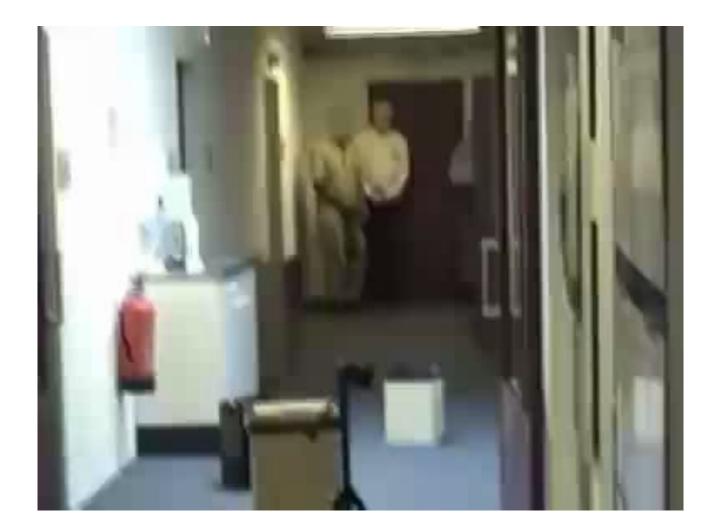
Buddhist Physicalism III: The Hard Problem Mark Siderits

Beyond folk psychology

- Avoiding Dharmageddon?
 - beyond folk physics: making those parts of Buddhist metaphysics built around 6th c CE folk physics compatible with results of modern natural sciences
 - necessary to do something similar for those parts of Buddhist metaphysics built around 6th c CE folk psychology?
 - isn't Buddhism already 'mind science'? systematic dismantling of folk psychology's Cartesian Theatre?
- What cog sci tells us about consciousness:
 - reducible
 - posit of a useful theory
 - only intermittently occurrent
- So to dismantle Cartesian Theatre must reveal illusory nature of consciousness
 - 'illusionism', 'fictionalism'

- But isn't an illusion something that appears to us—i.e., that we are conscious of? How could consciousness itself be illusory?
 - the 'hard problem', zombies and phenomenal consciousness
- Blindsight



Systems 1 and 2

- System 1: neural system in which sensory input goes straight to motor control system, efferent neural pathways
 - fast, efficient, promoting interests of organism
 - the ducking cyclist: 'I knew that branch was coming before I even saw it'
- System 2: neural system in which sensory input is posted on a 'global workspace' (via short-term memory) for further processing by dedicated mental modules that perform such functions as memory, verbal processing, fine motor control, etc.
 - attention as gatekeeper for global workspace
- The blindsight patient
 - reports:
 - 'I saw nothing'
 - I walked straight down the hall'
 - Performance: not fast but halting

- Two pathways to inclusion in System 1
 - natural selection
 - Habituation
 - 'driving on automatic pilot'
 - cf. Dharmakīrti's notion of *abhyāsavat pratyakṣa*
- Blindsight patient's performance halting because motor responses selected for coarse-grained motor control
- Is phenomenal consciousness a product of System 2?

Theory of Mind (ToM)

- Theory according to which a sentient being has covert states such as sensations, desires, feelings of pleasure and pain, beliefs, etc., to which the being has privileged access
- Widely shared, 'folk psychology'; Cartesian Theatre as a way of modeling
- Innate or developed?
- False Belief Test (FBT)
 - 3rd-person FBT
 - Results
 - 1st-person FBT
 - results
- ToM in prelinguistic infancy?

- Result: others-before-self acquisition of ToM
- Consequences
 - consonance with *arthāpatti* account of meta-cognition
 - consciousness as theoretical posit
 - ToM as useful fiction
 - explaining development of executive function
 - global workspace as locus of phenomenal consciousness?
 - phenomenal consciousness as illusion?
- Why this may sound absurd:
 - is phenomenal consciousness the mother of all illusions?
 - the child learns, and isn't learning a conscious process?

Language acquisition: the intuitive account

- The account expressed in the passage from Augustine quoted by Wittgenstein at beginning of PI:
 - The child perceives adults naming objects and moving toward things.
 - Accordingly the child infers that such-and-such an object is signified by a given sound.
 - So, as the child hears words used in sentences, he progressively learns what objects words signify, and in due course comes to use them to express his own desires
- Child already possesses concepts of objects
- Lacks knowledge of local names for these objects
- Capable of forming inferences
- I.e., thinking, but in a private language of thought

Thought as inner speech

- By critical pre-school years, child has attained sufficient linguistic facility to engage in conversational exchanges
- Begins to talk to itself, e.g. engage in pretend dialog with fantasy friend
- Sometimes extends to asking questions ('Where is the box of chalks?'), issuing commands ('Pay attention!')
- Seems pointless:
 - if the child does not know the answer to the question, then asking it is futile;
 - if the child is not paying attention, then telling itself to do so seems pointless
- But can nonetheless have results
 - shaking loose the relevant information in response to interrogative tone of voice
 - responding to the authoritative tone of voice in which the command is uttered
- Final step: inner speech, being covert, avoids the difficulty of prying ears

- Thought as developed capacity
 - global workspace requires robust capacity of executive function
 - development of autobiographical memory
 - facilitating the syntheses that install the 'I'-sense
- Folk psychology and the self-fulfilling prophecy
- Inner speech and the Cartesian Theatre
 - inner speech as fostering a doubling/mirroring
 - the mirror image as a stock Buddhist example of illusion
 - the doubling: speech producer and consumer
 - the mechanics of the Theatre's sound system
 - speech production and the forward model
 - 'hearing' the imperative tone of voice